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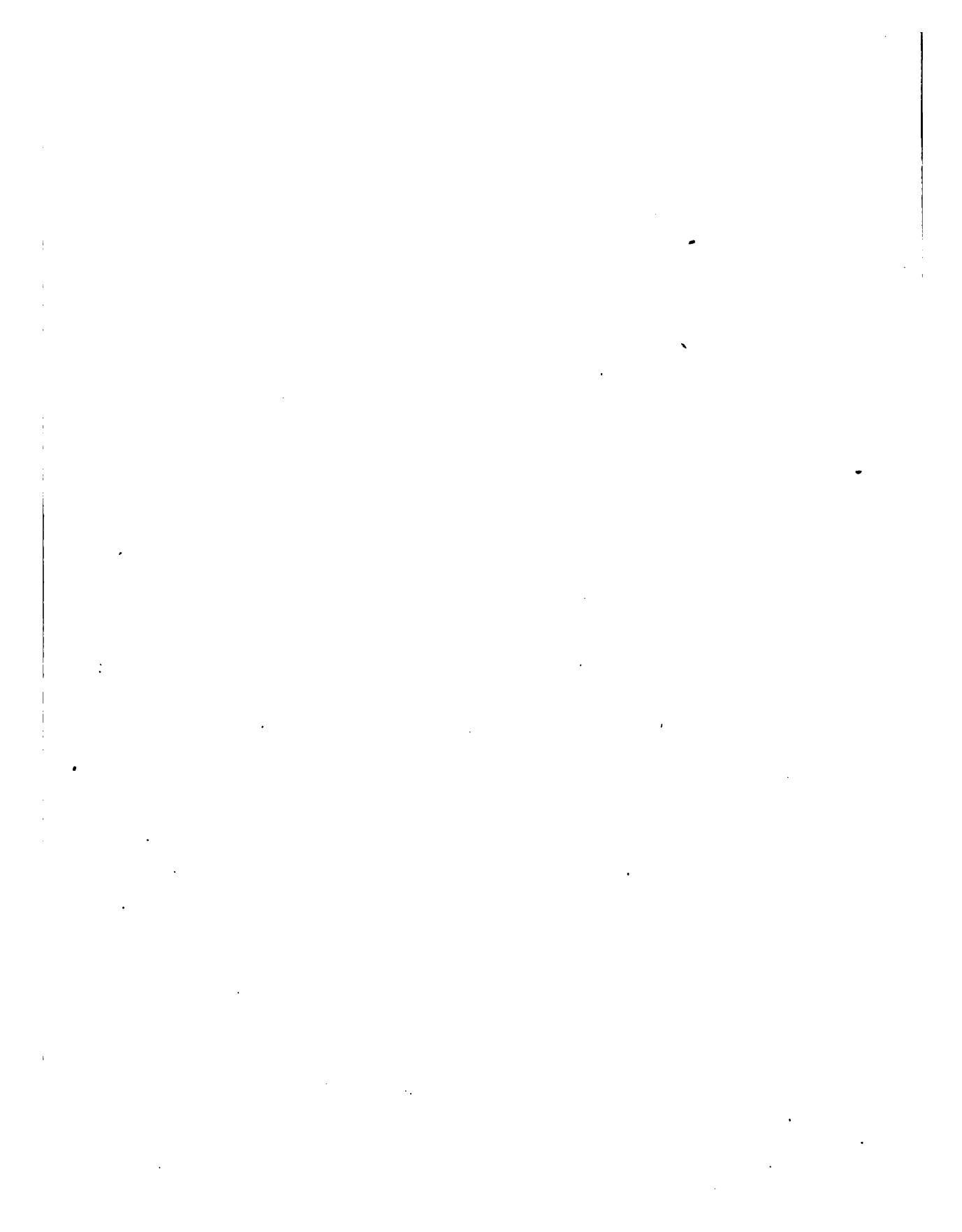
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BURNSIANA:

A COLLECTION OF LITERARY ODDS AND ENDS

RELATING TO

ROBERT BURNS

COMPILED BY

JOHN D. ROSS

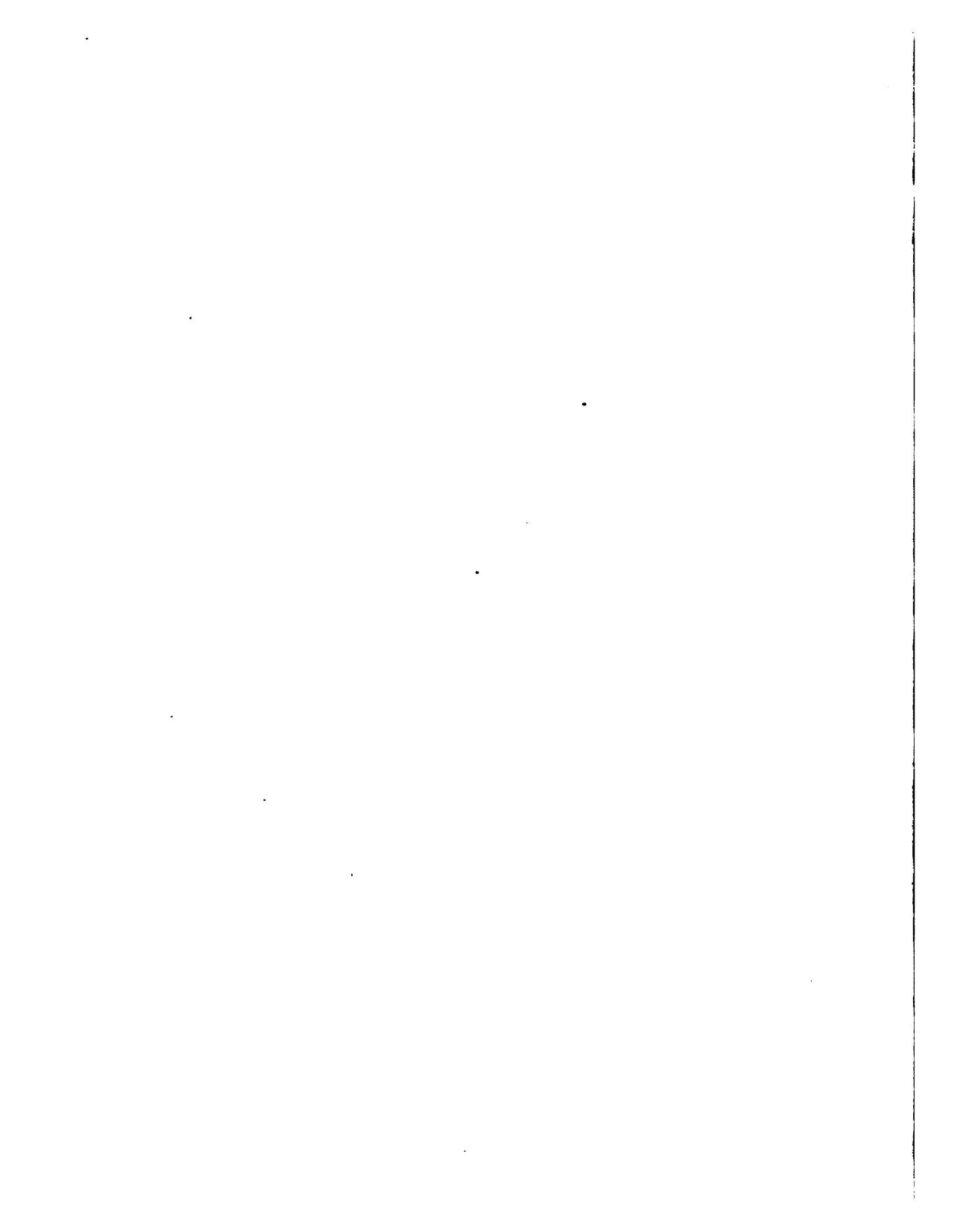
AUTHOR OF "SCOTTISH POETS IN AMERICA,"
AND EDITOR OF "CELEBRATED SONGS OF SCOTLAND," "ROUND BURNS' GRAVE," ETC.

Vol. I.

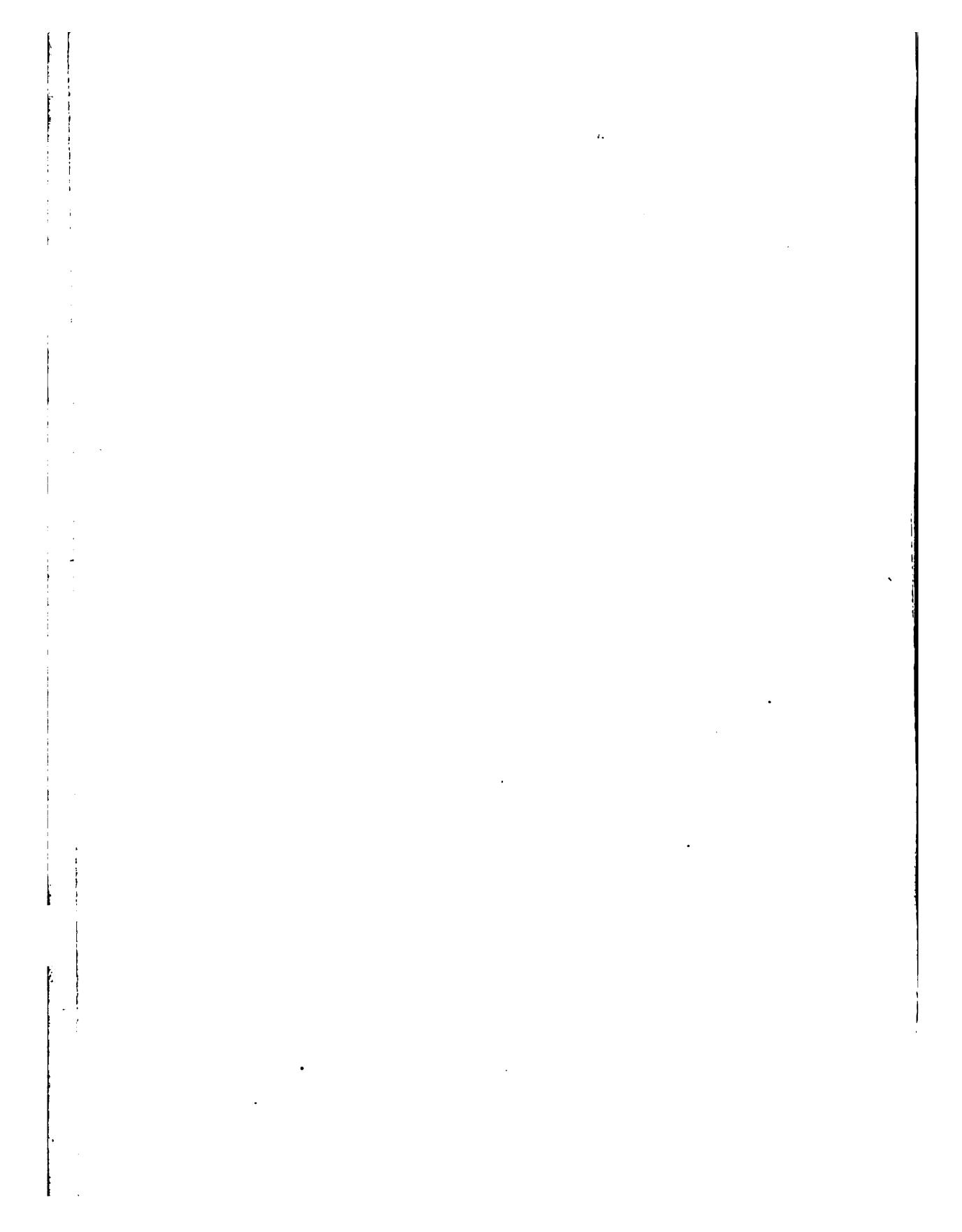
ALEXANDER GARDNER

Publisher to Her Majesty the Queen

PAISLEY; AND 26 PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON



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—
Vol. II.
—


ALEXANDER GARDNER
Publisher to Her Majesty the Queen
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1894
c

BEHOLD !—a morning sky,
And singing in its midmost heaven, a lark,
So sweet and clear, no trouble seemeth nigh,
Nor footstep of the dark.

E'en so !—our ploughman bard
In lark-like accents greets the morning ray ;
With soul elate upspringeth from earth's sward,
In song and raptur'd lay.

But lo !—a speck that grew
To thunderous glooms and mutterings overhead,
That lyric heart is palsied in the blue,
And Robert Burns lies dead!

JOHN MACFARLANE.



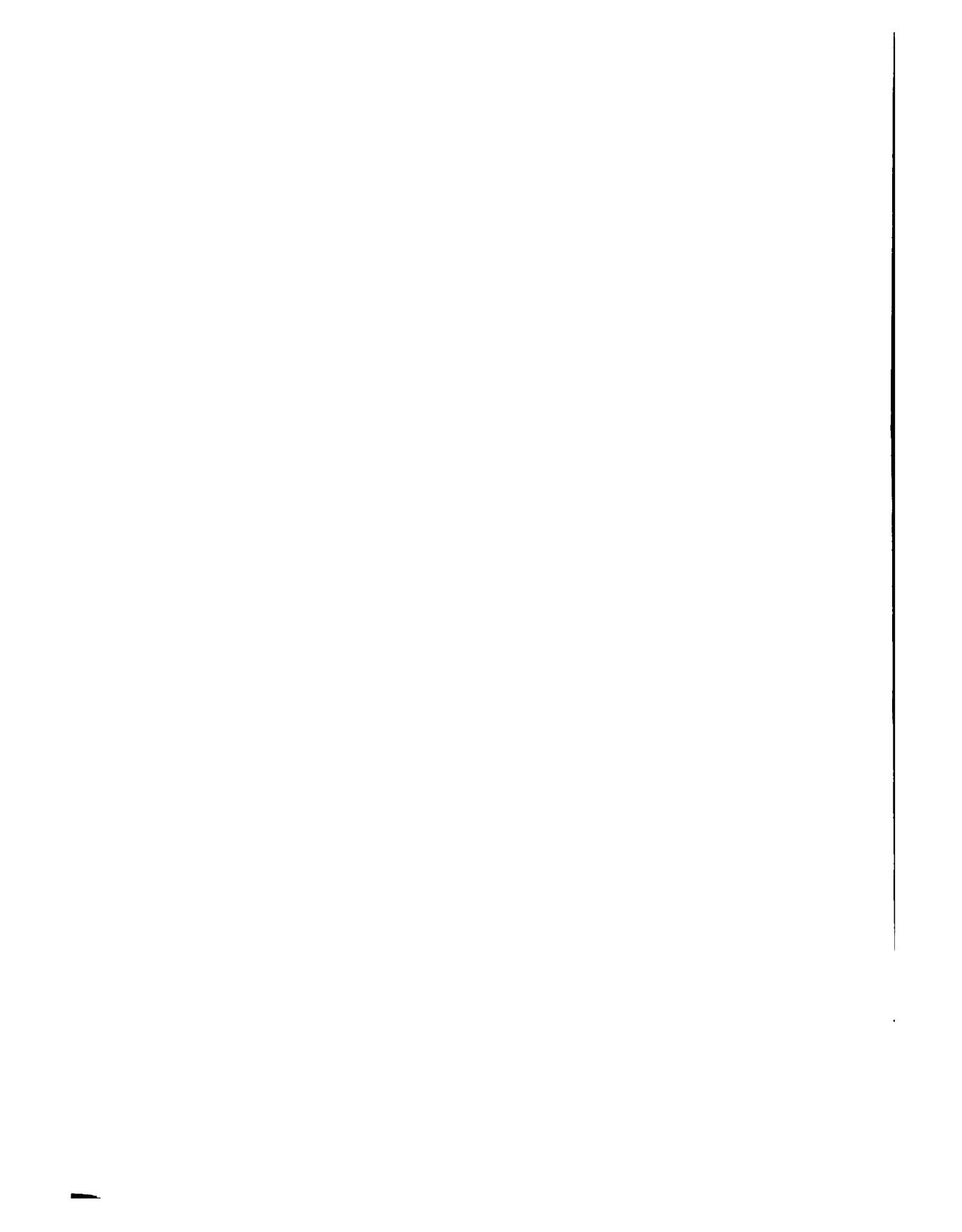
This Fourth Volume of BURNSIANA is

Dedicated to my Brother,

PETER ROSS

(AUTHOR OF "SCOTLAND AND THE SCOTS," "A LIFE OF ST. ANDREW," ETC.),

Whose kindly assistance and advice have rendered
doubly congenial the task of compiling this
and the preceding Volumes.

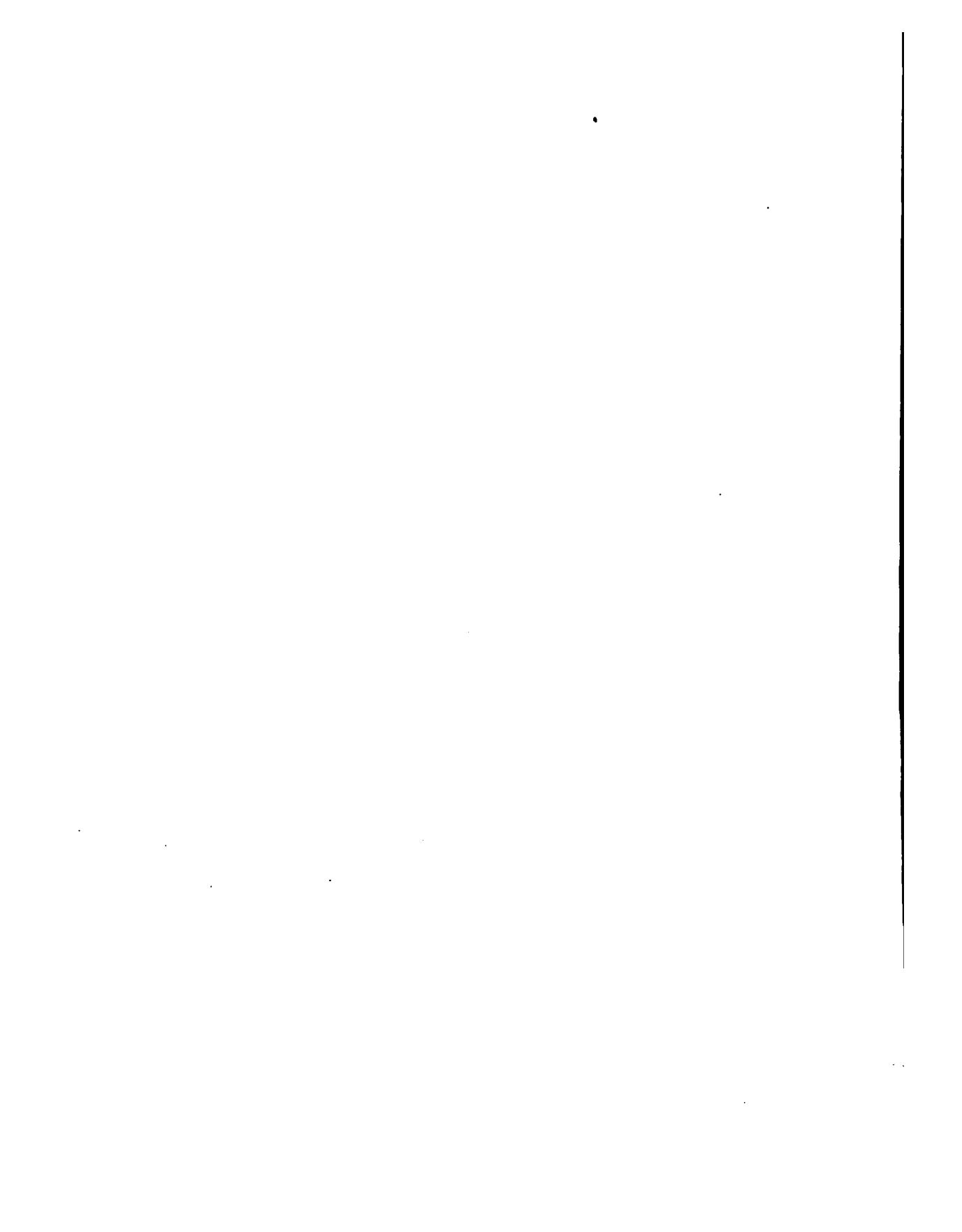


NOTE TO VOLUMES III. AND IV.

THE success that attended the publication of Volumes I. and II. of this work, and the large amount of material on the subject of Burns which has accumulated on my hands of late, have induced me to issue Volumes III. and IV. simultaneously. Thanks are again sincerely tendered to Subscribers, Contributors, and well-wishers.

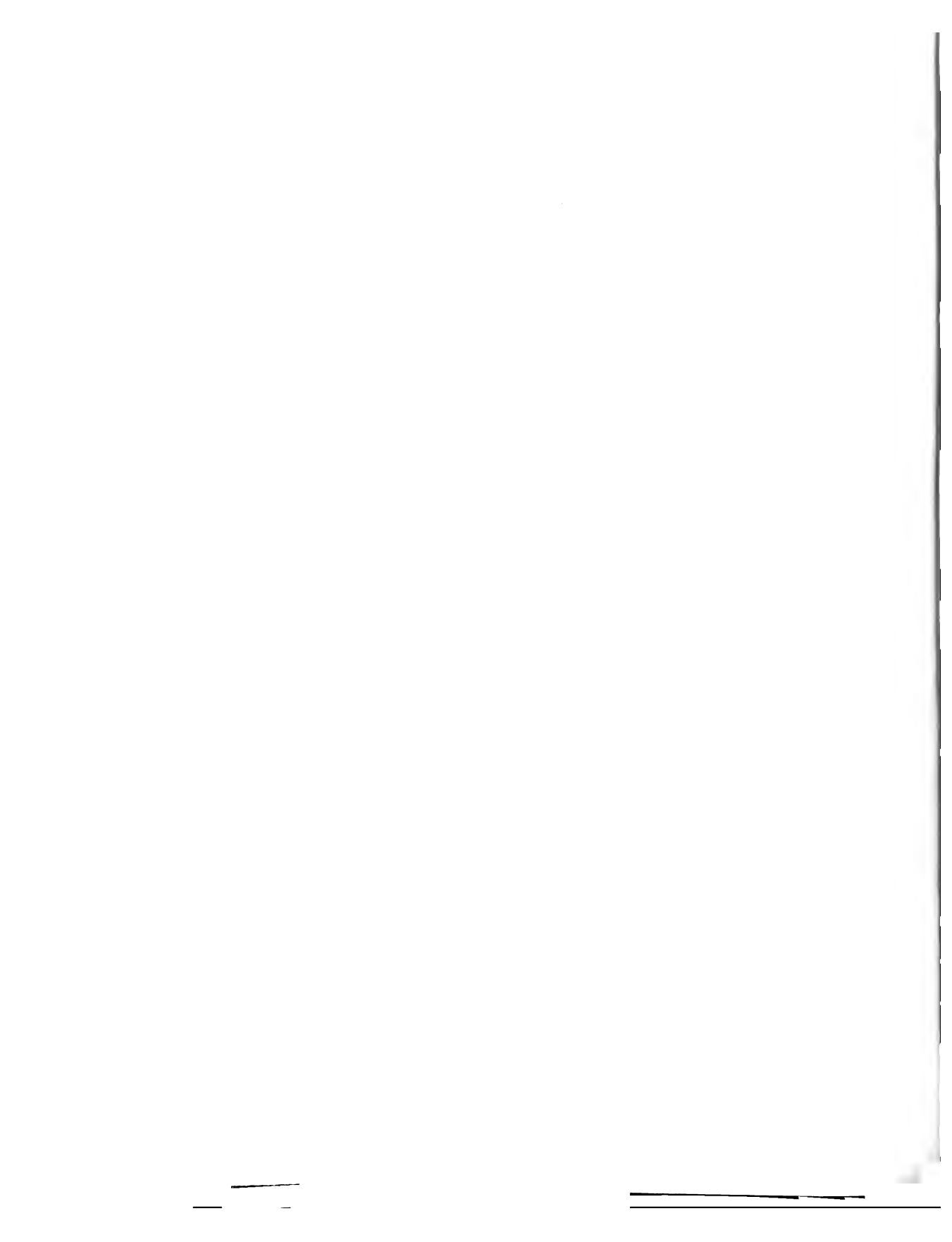
JOHN D. ROSS.

126 PALMETTO STREET,
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BURNSIANA.

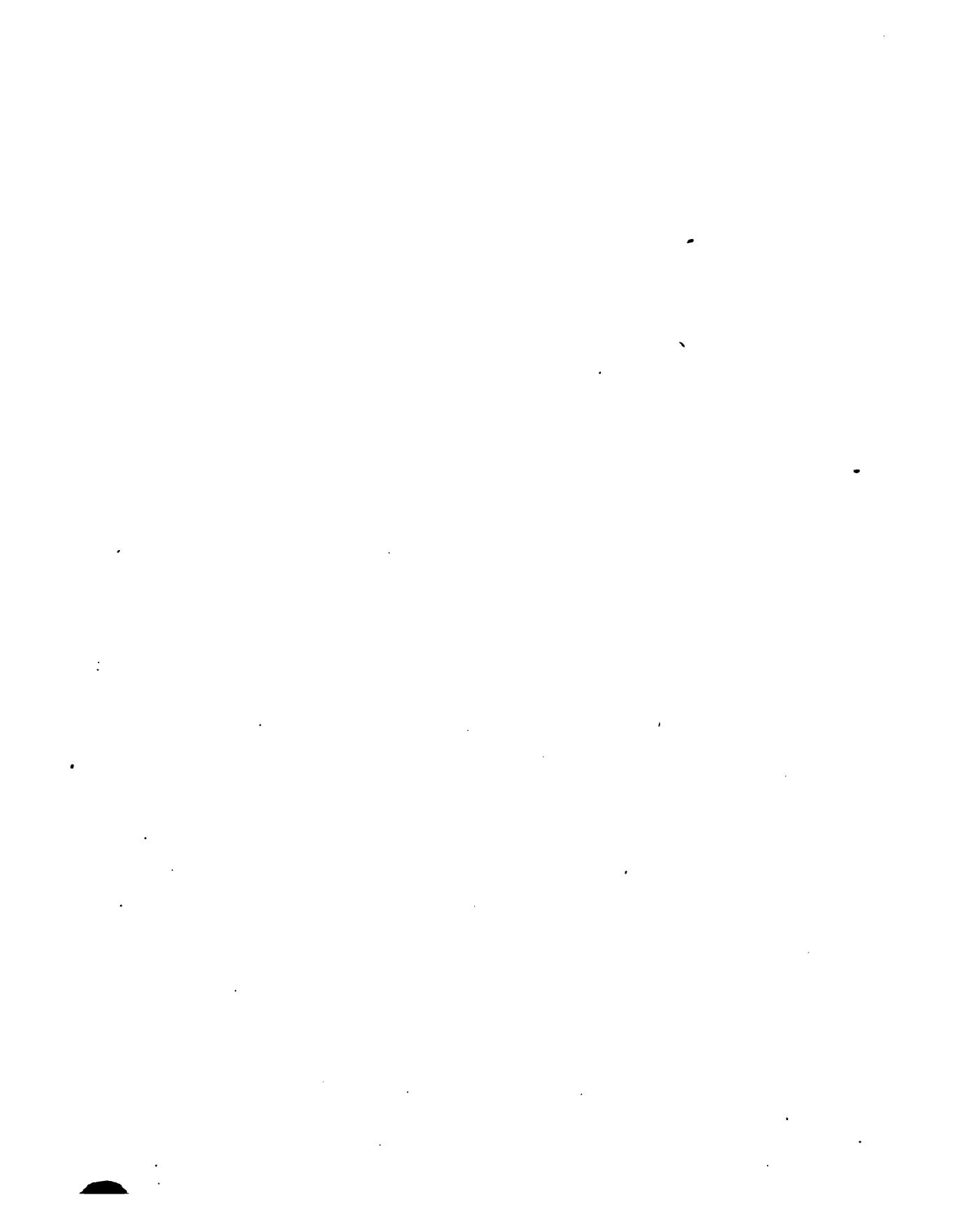
I.—MR. ROBERT FERGIE ON BURNS.

Reply to the toast “The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns,” delivered before the South Edinburgh Burns Club, January 25th, 1893.

REPRINTED FROM “NORTH BRITISH ADVERTISER AND LADIES JOURNAL.”

“THE Immortal Memory of Robert Burns”—is one on which, it might well be thought, little that is new or interesting could be uttered; for have not eminent or distinguished men, both in arts, divinity, and science, dilated on this topic again and again, both here and elsewhere, and exhausted all that can be said about it? and does it not seem somewhat impertinent for a humble individual like myself to presume to crave a hearing from a company like I see around me on a subject upon which such men have dilated. Would it not be better to utter a few platitudes about the immortal bard, extract a few quotations from the many speeches which have been made upon him and his works, and afterwards sit down with the usual self-satisfied smile of a man who has just taken a good dinner, repeated a few choice phrases to which nobody can take exception, but to which, at the same time, no one pays much heed, prepared, after fulfilling this onerous duty, to attack the wine or toddy, according as his tastes leads him. Well, gentleman, this I am prepared to admit would be the better plan to follow—were it not for one great objection which I cannot see my way to set aside; and so, at the risk of tiring your patience, or expressing opinions which may not meet with the approval of all—but which may not be, nevertheless, inopportune—I will venture to make a few remarks which the toast has suggested to my mind. And, first, let me state what this

objection is to which I refer. Briefly, it is this—The influence of the works of Burns and the story of his life is an active, living influence, extending or expanding as the years roll by, affecting alike our politics, our religion, our morals, our social life, so that in any movement, no matter whether it be onward or retrograde, an apt quotation from Burns, if by any means it can be utilised, is usually considered equal to a dozen long-winded arguments, even when they are advanced by popular speakers. And this holds good, not only in our own country, but in England and Ireland as well. For the influence of Burns has long since crossed the Borders, invaded Ireland, swept across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and is felt wherever Scotsman settle or the English language is spoken. If this be so, then—and no one here, I am sure, will be inclined to contradict this assertion—is there not ample scope afforded for thought or reflection or remark for any one who can look abroad on the field of human activity, and even cursorily watch or consider how this great factor is directing or shaping events, and whether the great ideals of the bard are on the way to be realised or not. In this sense, gentlemen, you will observe that a mine of inquiry, ever developing and changing, is opened, a mine far too large to exhaustively explore or dilate upon at such a meeting as this. We can only at best wander about and pick up and examine almost at random one or two of the





close of such a meeting as this, especially after the graver seniors have retired. But, whatever your several inclinations are—whether foregathering with lasses or without them—whether with brethren of the mystic tie, or in the home circle, I know no better picture of social enjoyment, even allowing for imperfections and after effects, than that drawn by Burns, which you all know so well :—

“ Oh, Willie brewed a peck o’ maut,
And Rob and Allan cam’ tae pree ;
Three blyther lads that lee-lang nicht
Ye wadna find in Christendie.”

Here there is no great company, there is no great show, and what is perhaps best, there are none of my brethren of the pencil present to note every little folly. Yet, can we not imagine the enjoyable scene, the feast of reason and the flow of soul, that would result from such a meeting as here described ? And though, with our altered customs, we would not wish to defend the excess ; withal, the harm done seems trifling, and is not so discreditable after all when compared to that emanating from so-called present-day enjoyments, which so largely find favour even in teetotal circles. When I hear such meetings loudly decried, I am always reminded of Sir Walter Scott’s novel, “The Fortunes of Nigel.” Those who have read that masterpiece of fiction will remember that the villain Dalgarno is represented as the son of an old-fashioned but honourable nobleman, the Earl of Huntinglen, and the sapient monarch, King James VI., who figures in the novel in an interview with George Heriot, thus refers to the honourable father and the ignoble son :—“ This Dalgarno does not drink so much or swear so much as his father, who is, indeed, the very soul of honour ; but he wenches, he dices, Geordie, and breaks his word and oath baith.” I sometimes think of these words when I hear some of the songs of Burns, like the last one I have quoted, and the drinking customs which formerly prevailed, so strenuously decried, especially when I consider some of the pastimes which have partly taken their place. If we have not so much drinking, have we not much more dicing or gambling ? which, in my humble opinion, is a great deal worse. If we have less drunkenness, are the scenes witnessed, for example, at many of our foot-

ball matches more edifying ? The obscene language, the coarse expressions, the gambling that goes on, the general tone prevailing among the tens of thousands who sometimes congregate to witness a notable football match, are apt to make one sigh for the old foibles—or vices, if you will—connected with drinking, if they only otherwise be combined with honour and honourable conduct. The fact is, it seems to be overlooked that evil is many-sided—unduly dammed up at one part, it overflows with violence at another ; and that a man, to walk uprightly and honourably through life, must learn, above all, to control his appetites, his tastes his desires. “ Prudence, caution, above all, self-control, is wisdom’s root.” Let it ever be borne in mind that liberty there is, but there is also ever present license. We crave for the former ; but conscience, not law, is the best monitor to preserve from the latter, and stands ever ready to warn us when we are inclined to overstep the proper boundary. True, human made law, encroaching on the domain of liberty, may punish, has punished oft for what cannot rightly be considered a crime ; but it is a dangerous and invidious task which the law undertakes, and is apt either to deaden conscience, or raise up that dangerous temper or feeling most difficult of all to quell—a feeling which is more or less awakened in all men when smarting under a sentence or punishment which they feel unjust or unmerited. No man in his day knew better than Burns the evils flowing from lack of self-control or prudence, and he more than once reveals how severely he was punished, not by law, but by the stings of his own conscience, when he stepped from temperance into excess. Thus he writes :—

“ Oh, burning hell, in all thy torments
There’s not a keener lash.”

And yet withal the keen pleasure he must have experienced when on special occasions a few kindred spirits foregathered must have in some degree compensated for the after pain, though, it be borne in mind, excess with him was the exception not the rule. But taking the worst view of the results of such meetings, it may still be said, if Addison held “that a day, an hour of virtuous liberty was worth a whole eternity of bondage,” and

if rare pleasures must always be succeeded by lassitude or pain—as men of temperament like Burns have ever felt—then we may be thankful that this, his visits to the tavern, caused by his liking for the companions he there met, resulted in nothing more than being a wee fou ; and that he never, at least, degenerated into the cool, calculating gamester, who would sell wife or mother, or child to obtain money with which to gamble.

But, gentlemen, I fear I am trespassing on your time, and there are only two other observations I wish to make before I sit down. It is sometimes said that we are losing our taste for Scottish poetry or verse, and prefer the imported trash from London music halls and elsewhere to our Scottish songs and ballads. Professor Stuart Blackie, as you know, is never tired of raving against the upper ten especially, or our West-End gentry, for their neglect or their ignoring of the songs of their country. Well, no doubt there is much truth in what he says, and perhaps nothing else ought to be expected, for in our higher class schools everything Scottish is persistently ignored, and even in our public Board Schools a song or poem in our good Scottish Doric is seldom sung or heard, and only after reflection and reading make our middle and working classes acquainted with them. But, sir, whatever the cause, if it be true what is said on this point—and I am much inclined to think it is true—it is they, the upper ten, who are the sufferers, not those who delight in the works of Burns and others who have followed in his steps. If the upper classes prefer trash, bombast, tomfoolery, namby-pamby sentiment, and indifferent French and German translations, in preference to the exquisite pathos, the pawky humour, the heroic sentiment, the beautiful word landscapes, the soul-stirring love strains to be met with in almost any selection of Scottish songs, it need not be wondered at if their aspirations and thoughts take shape in accordance with what their minds are fed upon. Gentlemen, be it recollected the schoolmaster is not abroad ; he is now ever present ; he is now a great and increasing power in the State, and he is in one sense a great leveller. I have no fear for our nobility and the positions they hold so long as they keep in the front or even near

the front of all that is good or great or ennobling ; but if they give preference to that which is silly and contemptible, because it is imported, and ignore, discard, and decry all that is beautiful and true and noble, simply because it is the produce and fruit and genius of the country, then I say their influence ought to wane, and it requires no prophet to foretell that it will wane, and that rapidly. Again, I have heard some young ardent, aspiring spirits, who have cast their eyes around on the miseries and inequalities of life still so glaring in our midst, exclaim, What good has Burns done after all ? There is as much oppression, misery, destitution as ever in our midst. We require some greater force, or greater men, or a greater upheaval than ever we had to make a proper advance. But is not this another phase of the tee-totalers' argument, or a desire to advance on a fortress before the right hour has arrived, or before the forces are ready ? Disaster has always followed such ill-advised steps, and nothing else might be expected. But we are advancing notwithstanding, and we trust in God will still continue to advance. Canting or hypocrisy there is, and will be ; but such poems as "Holy Willie's Prayer" and the "Holy Fair" have not been written in vain. They have been, and will ever be, stern and forcible checks, if used and applied aright, to arrest its progress, or they will act as crushers when it rears its head too far above the surface, and so exercise a power which cannot be gauged or estimated. Retrogression and depression and heart-sinking there may be; but the trumpet-call will be ever sounding in our ear to bid us to take courage, renew the struggle, and "Onward, do or die !" Lust and passion may lure or prevail ; but is not the anathemas of the poet an aid to virtue, or a deterrent which may well make the boldest libertine pause before the fatal step is taken ?—

" Is there in human form, that bears a heart—
 A wretch ! a villain ! lost to love and truth !
 That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
 Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth ?
 Curse on his perjured arts ! dissembling smooth !
 Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled ?
 Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
 Points to the parents fondling o'er their child ?
 Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction
 wild ? "

Once more, are we inclined to make light of religion because some of its professors are not what they ought to be, and seem more inclined to preach for self than for love?—does not the inimitable picture of Burns rebuke our irreverence, and teach us to look in on ourselves, our own conduct in the higher life, and study the verities of religion rather than religionists, and not to harp on the faults of others in order to screen our own? Cannot the humblest, if he chooses, act or be like the cottar who—admired by all, even by those who believe not in his creed—is thus described:—

“ Kneeling down to Heaven’s eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays,”
for,

“ Compared to this, how poor Religion’s pride,
In all the pomp of method and art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion’s every grace except the heart.”

Again, are you cast down, oppressed, almost overborne by the buffets of fortune? Does not the counsel tendered by Burns, or the example shown by him, point out clearly the only manly course to pursue?—“ Meet them with undaunted mind.” And though, like him, ye may hae misfortunes great and sma’, “ Hae aye a heart aboon them a’.” Where can better counsel be found than this? It is just another variant of the more elaborate passage of Dryden, where he says:—

“ Fortune, that with malicious joy
Does man, her slave, oppress,
Proud of her efforts to destroy,
Is seldom pleased to bless.
Still various and inconstant still,
But with an inclination to do ill,
Uplifts, degrades, delights in strife,
And makes a mockery of life.
I can enjoy her when she’s kind,
But when she dances in the wind,
And shakes her wings and will not stay,
I puff the prostitute away.
Content in poverty my soul I arm,
And virtue, though in rags, shall keep me warm.”

Once again let me point for a moment to a theme on which Burns truly delights to dwell—namely, charity, and that in the noblest and widest sense of the word. He points more than once to its delights, thus—

“ A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss;”

and he also shows, when it is neglected, how misery results—

“ Man’s inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn.”

But it is in the charitable thought, in contradistinction to the deed, that Burns shines highest and where his precept most tells, where it may best be followed, and where on young and old alike it may be with advantage engraven on the heart:—

“ Gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin’ wrang,
To step aside is human.”

Always remembering the absolute truth of his words, which may afford a soothing balm to those who act up to them:—

“ The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.”

Lastly, does not Burns, in the midst of selfishness and all sorts of discouragements, keep ever alive within us that divine grace, hope—hope for ourselves, hope for others, hope in the coming brotherhood of man. Again and again this angel grace appears to droop her head and shake her wings, as if to depart, when we are wallowing through one of the many sloughs of despond in our journey through life, and again and again is she recalled as we take courage and utter the refrain—

“ Let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a’ that,
That man to man the world o’er
Shall brothers be for a’ that.”

As to Burns’s life, what can be said? He was intensely human—human like ourselves—and to err, we all know is human. But this is very noticeable, his weaknesses and sins act as danger-signals to warn, not as false lights to allure or entice us on to destruction. What more would we have? His works, his life come down to us as a priceless legacy, which we may only neglect at our peril. I cannot believe this will ever happen. Changes may come, but truth endures; the forefront in the nations may be taken by another people, but in the direst calamities which may happen, his words will be cherished, I have no doubt, by the most undaunted and most noble spirits of our race or nation, and will

always prove a strong support and stay in perilous hours when they rely upon them. Holding such opinions, then, whether we be in prosperity or adversity, is it not meet that we should assemble to do honour to his memory. Such meetings help to renew our faith and strengthen our hope in the coming future ; they give an impetus to the more generous impulses of our hearts ; they incul-

cate the fraternal feeling that ought to be extended to all ; as well as the social feeling that demands a time for relaxation and enjoyment as well as work ; above all, they impress upon us the necessity of cultivating that Godlike attribute, charity—charity not only to the humblest, the poorest, the most degraded of our fellow-mortals, but even to the brute creation, the beasts that perish.

II.—VERSES ATTRIBUTED TO BURNS.

The following lines, which have not appeared in any edition of the author's works, are said to have been composed by Burns, and written on a marble sideboard in the hermitage belonging to the Duke of Athol in the wood of Abersfeldy :—

WHOE'ER thou art, the lines now reading
Think not, though from the world receding,
I joy my lonely days to lead in
 This desert dear,
That with remorse a conscience bleeding
 Hath led me here.

No thought of guilt my bosom sours ;
Free-willed I fled from courtly bowers ;
For well I saw in halls and towers
 That lust and pride,
The arch-fiend's dearest, darkest powers,
 In state preside.

I saw mankind with vice incrusted,
I saw that honour's sword was rusted,
That few for aught but folly lusted,
That he was still deceived who trusted
 To love or friend ;
And hither came, with men disgusted,
 My life to end.

In this lone cave, in garments lowly,
Alike a foe to noisy folly,
And brow-bent, gloomy melancholy,
 I wear away
My life, and in my office holy
 Consume the day.

This rock my shield, when storms are blowing,
The limpid streamlet yonder flowing
Supplying drink, the earth bestowing
 My simple food ;

But few enjoy the calm I know in
 This desert wood.

Content and comfort bless me more in
This grot than e'er I felt before in
A palace, and with thought still soaring
 To God on high,
Each night and morn with voice imploring
 This wish I sigh :

Let me, O Lord, from life retire,
Unknown each guilty worldly fire,
Remorseful throb, or loose desire ;
 And when I die,
Let me in this belief expire—
 To God I fly.

Stranger, if full of youth and riot,
And yet no grief has marred thy quiet,
Thou haply throw'st a scornful eye at
 The hermit's prayer,
But if thou hast a cause to sigh at
 Thy fault or care ;

If thou hast known false love's vexation,
Or hast been exiled from thy nation,
Or guilt affrights thy contemplation,
 And makes thee pine ;
Oh ! how must thou lament thy station,
 And envy mine !

This copy is made from an old verse-book
printed in 1815.

III.—BURNS IN ART.

BY H. C. SHELLEY.

"BRITISH painters," remarked M. Chesneau, one of the best known of French art critics, "do not usually seek their themes for heroic works from ancient mythology, but from the legends of their own poets." That judgment was formed after a course of study in the old masters of the British school. If M. Chesneau had to pen a sentence on a similar topic today he could hardly, in face of the recent history of British art, repeat the dictum quoted above, for it is indubitably certain that of late years our artists have become less patriotic in their choice of themes. It would be difficult to formulate a satisfactory reason for this widespread desertion of British literature by British art, for certainly no painter can claim, in the words of La Bruyère, that all is painted and he comes too late. Burns alone would give the lie to such a claim, and that notwithstanding the long list of men who have addressed themselves to the pictorial interpretation of his text. Judged by that canon which would allot poets their rank according to the number of pictures which they offer the artist, the Ayrshire bard would command a supreme place, and this fact was realised far more fully by artists of fifty years ago than it is by their present-day successors. There is still ample room for artistic work which will interpret the spirit of Burns to the nineteenth century, notwithstanding the fact that nearly a hundred years have sped by since the poet went into the great silence.

It is charming to note the rollicking enthusiasm with which Burns received Mr. Thomson's present of David Allan's picture from "The Cottar's Saturday Night." Mr. Thomson thought it one of the happiest productions of that artist's pencil, but was in considerable trepidation lest the poet's opinion should not coincide with his own. He had little reason to harbour such a thought. "Ten thousand thanks for your elegant present," the delighted poet wrote, "though I am ashamed of the value of it being bestowed on a man who has not, by any

means, merited such an instance of kindness. I have shown it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in classing it a first-rate production. My phiz is sae kenspeckle, that the very joiner's apprentice, whom Mrs. Burns employed to break up the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew it at once. My most grateful compliments to Allan, who has honoured my rustic muse so much with his masterly pencil. A strange coincidence is, that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail is the most striking likeness of an ill-deedie, d—n'd, wee, rumble-gairie urchin of mine, whom from that propensity to witty wickedness and manfu' mischief, which, even at twa days auld, I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named Willie Nicol, after a certain friend of mine who is one of the masters of a grammar school in a city which shall be nameless. Several people think that Allan's likeness of me is more striking than Nasmyth's, for which I sat to him half-a-dozen times." The picture which the poet praises so warmly must be placed, chronologically, at the head of the long gallery of illustrations which, since the year 1795, have owed their inspiration to the name of Burns. It is gratifying to know that he gazed upon the first fruits of the golden artistic harvest which was to be reaped from his poems, for that was a privilege denied to Dante, to Shakespeare, and many another lord of Parnassus. David Allan also attempted illustrations of "Scots wha hae" and "John Anderson my Jo." Whether Burns saw these pictures is doubtful; and in the case of the first-named immaterial; for it is hardly probable that it would have gained his approbation. The impetuous rush of that noble song finds no expression in Allan's illustration. A motley army of anything but heroic aspect is being led against an invisible foe by an armour-clad warrior astride a very wooden horse. These are not the Scots "wha hae wi' Wallace bled," and this is not the Bruce of Bannockburn's glorious field. But

Allan was happier in dealing with the song of "John Anderson my Jo." Indeed, there is more naturalness about his picture of that domestic idyl than most of the other innumerable embodiments of the song. Here the old wife's outburst of love is plainly a mere unstudied interlude in the "trivial round, the common task" of every-day life; it is but the voicing of a spirit which dwells continually within that peaceful cottage. Other pictures of that song offend chiefly by their air of formality; the singer has conned her part, and is conscious of a larger audience than he of the "frosty pow." In the main it is possible to agree with the praise Burns bestowed upon Allan's interpretation of "The Cottar's Saturday Night." Perhaps it is too spacious an interior the artist has given us, and at least some of its occupants wear too refined an air. The reverend old peasant has "waled a portion with judicious care," and a spirit of worship holds his listeners attentive. But the artist has struck one discordant note. The urchin seated on the floor near the fire with the end of a cat's tail between a pair of scissors sadly disturbs the harmony of the solemn scene, and it is no compensation that the poet declared him to have a striking likeness to one of his own offspring. A portrait of the poet himself is introduced into the picture in the person of the young man—presumably the "neebor lad" who came to convey Jenny home—seated on the left of the toil-worn cottar, and, so far as it is possible to judge a portrait without seeing the person portrayed, it is undoubtedly worthy of a favourable comparison with that by Nasmyth. The face has much of that form and proportion and harmony of features which Kingsley thought might lay its owner open to the danger of being mobbed by ladies whenever he walked the streets. Although executed a year before the poet died, this picture of "The Cottar's Saturday Night" seems not to have become public property until it was engraved for the edition of Burns published in Glasgow in 1836 under the joint editorship of the Ettrick Shepherd and Motherwell. The same edition contained Allan's "Scots Wha Hae" and "John Anderson my Jo," in addition to pictures by W. B. Scott of "Tam

o' Shanter" and "The Twa Dogs." Scott's rendering of the first-named poem concerned itself with the vital moment of the witches' dance, and the picture, while eminently faithful in detail, has a good deal of rapid movement and hilarious spirit. The conception of Satan is particularly successful. In interpreting "The Twa Dogs" Mr. Scott seized upon the New Year's Day Morning episode, but with less happy results than in his delineation of "Tam o' Shanter."

With remarkably few exceptions the illustrators of Burns have been peculiarly fortunate in their choice of subjects from his verse, and their good genius has rarely deserted them when the critical moment of any given poem had to be hit upon. There is more in this good fortune than appears on the surface. Goethe once remarked that it is because modern artists have no worthy subjects that people are so hampered in all the art of modern times, and he illustrated his opinion with this instance:—"Very few artists are clear on this point, or know what will really be satisfactory. For instance, they paint my 'Fisherman' as the subject of a picture, and do not think that it cannot be painted. In this ballad nothing is expressed but the charm in water which tempts us to bathe in summer; there is nothing else in it, and how can that be painted?" But granted that the right poems have been chosen, it is equally important that the right point in each poem shall also be selected. Contemporary art furnishes us with many examples of apt decisions in this matter. In his "Three Fishers," Mr. C. N. Hemy has chosen the pathetic moment when "each thought on the woman who loved him the best;" in "On the Banks of Allan Water" Mr. Schmalz has illustrated the tragic hour in which the miller's daughter learns that her lover is false; and in "Francesca and Paola" Mr. G. F. Watts has seized the movement of the ill-fated lovers as they are borne towards Dante on the unresting blast. All these examples show keen recognition of a principle strongly insisted on by Sir Joshua Reynolds—"A painter must compensate the natural deficiencies of his art. He has but one sentence to utter; but one moment to exhibit." How constantly the illustrators of Burns have borne this principle

in mind is made plain by even a casual study of their work.

Putting aside the Liverpool edition of the works of Burns—published in 1800—which contained a few vignettes by Bewick, the first illustrated edition of the poems was that issued by an Edinburgh publisher in 1801. The two volumes have three illustrations divided between them, each being the work of Mr. A. Carse. The poems to have the greatness of artistic interpretation thrust upon them are “The Holy Fair,” “The Cottar’s Saturday Night,” and “The Jolly Beggars;” and when it is remembered that Mr. Carse had few models and no predecessors, his sterling qualities as a pioneer call for generous recognition. The illustrations are admirable examples of line work, and, though small, are liberal in detail. Unlike later illustrators of “The Holy Fair,” most of whom elected to show the meeting between the poet and the “three hizzies,” Mr. Carse made choice of the preaching scene for his picture. A motley crowd has gathered in the main street of Mauchline, and Moodie, with “eldritch squeal an’ gestures,” is clearing the points of faith “Wi’ rattlin’ an’ wi’ thumpin’” from the vantage ground of what appears to be a kind of elevated sentry-box. In his rear Smith is waiting the moment which shall afford him opportunity to “open out his cauld harangues,” oblivious of the presence in the crowd of the poet who was to etch his portrait for future generations. There is about both these parsons that air of snug complacency which the poet resented so indignantly and portrayed so powerfully. As in the case of David Allan’s picture, Mr. Carse’s representation of “The Cottar’s Saturday Night” concerns itself with the hour of family worship, and is a highly successful rendering of the reverent spirit of the simple peasants. With the “Jolly Beggars” the artist was hardly so successful. The riotous spirit of that meeting in Poosie Nansie’s eluded his brush, and it is difficult to identify any of the characters save the soldier and his lass. Nevertheless, the picture is dashed with more than a touch of Hogarthian humour, and subsequent treatments of the same theme were indebted to it for several happy suggestions.

It was a fortunate chance which associated Thomas Bewick, “the Burns of painting,” as Mr. Ruskin felicitously calls him, with his great prototype of poetry, and that notwithstanding the modicum of truth contained in Leslie’s assertion that Bewick resembles Hogarth in being an abler expounder of his own stories than those of others. Admitting this, it is still true that in the England of the opening years of this century there was not another man who could have brought to the task of illustrating Burns so many of the qualities conspicuous in the poet’s best work. It was this fact which made Leslie declare, “His feeling for the beauties of nature as they were impressed on him directly, and not at second-hand, is akin to the feeling of Burns, and his own designs remind me, therefore, much more of Burns than the few which he made from the poet.” Of course, it must not be forgotten that Bewick did not prepare the designs for the edition of Burns, published at Alnwick in 1808—that part of the labour was performed by John Thurston, a London draughtsman of exceptional skill. But Bewick could not help infusing his own pronounced individuality into every stroke of his graver, and hence the directness and simplicity of the cuts he contributed to the Alnwick edition of Burns. They include fourteen whole-page illustrations, the subjects being the following:—“Death and Dr. Hornbook,” “The Holy Fair,” “Address to the Deil,” “The Vision,” “Poor Mailie,” “Hallowe’en,” “The Auld Farmer’s Salutation,” “To a Haggis,” “The Cottar’s Saturday Night,” “Tam o’ Shanter,” “Address to the Toothache,” “Man was made to Mourn,” “The Lammes Night,” and “Green Grow the Rashes.” In addition to these whole-page plates, there are numerous tailpieces, many of which, however, have little or nothing to do with the poems to which they are appended. All these illustrations deserve reproduction. They are eminently faithful to the spirit of the poet, replete with humour or pathos, and devoid of cheap sentimentality. The old-time spirit by which they are characterised should be no obstacle to their reproduction in a present-day edition of Burns; rather would it lend a

piquancy sadly lacking in the cheaper illustrated editions of the poet.

One of the most unique of the early illustrations to Burns was the plate of "The Jolly Beggars" executed by Isaac Cruikshank, the father of George Cruikshank, as a frontispiece for a London edition of 1809. It is a crude and somewhat coarse drawing, but an admirable interpretation of the essential spirit of the poem. In addition to the figures of the principal actors in that boisterous scene in Poosie-Nansie's, there is, in the lower, right-hand corner of the plate, a wonderfully perfect drawing of a small boy, whose head does not reach the height of the old box on which the "raucle carlin" is sitting. The explanation of this interloper was given by George Cruikshank in the following letter addressed to a correspondent who had requested some information concerning the picture :— "The illustration of 'The Jolly Beggars' was designed and etched by my father, Isaac Cruikshank, who, I find, did sometimes add the additional 'c' to his name. I recollect the plate the instant I saw it, but the etching must have been done when I was very young, when my father allowed me sometimes to play at etching on the backgrounds, or on the corner of the copperplates ; and in this subject of 'The Jolly Beggars' there is a little urchin standing in the corner of the plate, which is evidently one of my attempts at etching when a little boy. In a work entitled 'Points of Humour,' published about 1822-23, there are, I think, four illustrations designed and etched by me. I have also painted two pictures in oil-colours of Tam o' Shanter, and I have made many sketches from Burns's poems." Critics are nearly unanimous in giving the Burns illustrations in "Points of Humour" the highest rank among Cruikshank's drawings. Happily, however, the mood which, in the artist's later years, consecrated to temperance what should have been given to the world, passed away for a time, and in the bright interval he designed a series of illustrations to "Tam o' Shanter," which have seldom been equalled and never surpassed. Twelve full-page drawings set forth in bold outline the most memorable events in that unforgettable night, and all the by-play of elfish tricks and un-

canny sights which the imagination almost unconsciously supplies as the drama is unfolded, are woven about the text of the poem in a masterly fashion. The industrious reaper of such chattel could gather a fine harvest of anachronisms from these illustrations, but their disturbing effect is completely overborne by sheer force of genius.

John Burnet, engraver and painter, a fellow student of Sir David Wilkie, was one of the first to illustrate Burns on an extensive scale. His designs, upwards of twenty in number, appeared in an edition of the poems published in Edinburgh in 1811. Nearly every poem of importance received its interpretation, but in remarkably few instances does the interpretation harmonise with the spirit of Burns. Lack of movement and an absence of intelligent appreciation of the subsidiary points of the poems are the most conspicuous faults of Burnet's work. As engravings they approach marvellously near perfection ; which is to be expected in the work of a man who asked three hundred guineas for engraving Wilkie's *Rabbit on the Wall*. A small example of Burnet's work in oil may be seen in the Corporation Galleries. It is at once the only canvas by that artist and the only Burns picture possessed by the Corporation. Perhaps one example of Burnet is enough ; whether it is creditable that the Corporation of the largest city in Scotland can only show one picture interpretative of the peer of Scottish poets is a question not difficult to answer. And such a picture as the one is ! The catalogue declares it to be a "Tam o' Shanter," but it has little affinity with the poem of that name. The visitor who cares to listen may often hear the *vox populi* expressing an opinion on that picture, and it is generally an opinion of a kind which would have troubled the soul of the worthy artist not a little. This may not count for much with most pictures, but in the case of a "Tam o' Shanter" it is a fatal verdict.

Burns has seldom had a more sympathetic interpreter than he secured a little more than sixty years ago in the person of Thomas Landseer, the elder brother of the famous painter of that name. Thomas Landseer occupies a commanding position in the school of British engravers, and his delicate

reproductions of his brother's most striking pictures rendered yeoman service in making their family name familiar as household words in nearly every home in these isles. Occasionally Thomas Landseer laid aside the graver for the pencil, and when he did so to illustrate "Tam o' Shanter" and the "Address to the Deil" it was with no ordinary measure of success. The illustrations to these poems were published separately in slim pamphlet form in 1830. The "Tam o' Shanter" contained five whole page drawings, extended to sixteen pages, and was published at the price of two shillings; the "Address to the Deil" had seven whole-page plates, numbered twenty-three pages, and was sold for three shillings and sixpence. The "Tam o' Shanter" is by far the abler performance of the two, but that is a verdict by no means detrimental to the "Address to the Deil;" for the interpretation of the former poem is, in its general level of excellence, about the most successful British art can boast of. Mr. Landseer concentrated his thought on the five most critical moments of the poem—the cottage where Tam's spouse sat "nursing her wrath to keep it warm," the ingle-nook of the inn consecrated to Souter Johnny's "queerest stories," the approach of Tam to the luridly-lit walls of Kirk Alloway; the mad dance of warlocks and witches within the sacred building; and the final triumph of Meg at the cost of her good gray tail. It is not difficult to agree with the opinion of a Glasgow second-hand bookseller, that these five drawings of "Tam o' Shanter" are "the best that have ever been published." Perhaps it would be safer to say that their only rivals for that place of honour are the designs by George Cruikshanks mentioned above. The illustrations of the "Address to the Deil" are based upon Stanzas V., VII., and VIII., IX., XII., XIII., XV. and XVI., and XVII., and, although not equal to the designs in the "Tam o' Shanter," they all faithfully interpret the spirit of the text, and several of them are triumphs of no mean order. Both these pamphlets are now exceedingly rare. In a recent catalogue the "Address to the Deil" was priced at 12s. 6d., and the "Tam o' Shanter" at 8s. 6d. But the latter has fetched a much higher price, for a copy once

changed hands in a Glasgow sale-room at the figure of 18s. Twenty years ago a Paisley bookseller offered a big pile of the "Tam o' Shanter" for 3d. a copy!

A series of outline drawings, somewhat in the manner of Flaxman's illustrations to Homer and Dante, was executed for the Diamond Edition of Burns's work by James Stewart, who is best remembered as the engraver of several of Wilkie's pictures. Perhaps Stewart's drawings are most remarkable for their departure from orthodox interpretations. For instance, in the picture of "Rent Day," drawn to illustrate "The Twa Dogs," it is a woman who is tholing the factor's snash, and by all appearance she is holding her own in the wordy battle, and not at all overawed by her moneyless condition. Again, in "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut," we look in vain for a portrait of the poet. The most successful of Stewart's illustrations are those interpretative of "Auld Lang Syne," "The Jolly Beggars," and "Death and Dr. Horn-book." The first is characterised by a welcome air of spontaneity; the second, though rather too self-conscious, is almost Hogarthian in its wealth of suggestive detail; and the third hits off in a happy fashion the poet's whisky-bred unconcern at his encounter with Death.

Passing over the work of Richard Westall—who gave lessons in drawing to the Queen before she came to the throne—C. Muss, W. H. Brooke, C. R. Leslie, W. and D. Lizars, T. Unwins, T. Watt, and J. Scott, justice demands that pause be taken to make honourable mention of the industry and talent Mr. John Faed, R.S.A., has devoted to illustrating the text of his great fellow-countrymen. Nearly forty years ago Mr. Faed was requested by the Royal Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland to prepare a series of illustrations to the poems of Burns, and he elected to work on "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "Tam o' Shanter," and "The Soldier's Return." For each of these poems, he writes, he made a series of careful drawings in black and white, which drawings, after they had been engraved, went as prizes to the subscribers. There are eight illustrations to "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and six to each of the other two poems. In spite

of careful study and admirable draughtsmanship, it cannot be said that Mr. Faed was particularly successful in interpreting "The Cottar's Saturday Night" or "The Soldier's Return." While several of the pictures in these series could hardly be more happily conceived, yet taken as a whole they fail in that harmonious sequence which is so apparent in the poems they portray. The hero and heroine of "The Soldier's Return" are far too refined for the actors in that drama; this carefully brushed son of Mars and this soft-skinned maiden might have lived in Arcady. The same fault is manifest in the second picture of the "Tam o' Shanter" set. Otherwise that series is worthy of hearty praise. From the cottage interior, where Tam's wrathful dame keeps her sleepless vigil, to the brig where the plucky old mare foiled the hurrying pack of warlocks and witches, the story is unfolded with rare dramatic skill. Mr. Faed has revelled in the witches' dance, and has drawn a Nannie who would have pleased the poet himself, even had he been as great a judge of female beauty as he is often erroneously supposed to have been. At various times Mr. Faed has extended into oil paintings several of the sketches he made for these Burns pictures, and the number will be increased at the forthcoming exhibition of the Institute of Fine Arts in Glasgow, to which the artist is sending a painting based upon one of his sketches for "The Soldier's Return."

Perhaps the most wholesale illustrator of Burns was J. M. Wright, whose forty odd designs were engraved in steel for that ambitious edition of the Poet's works published in 1838 by George Virtue. Mr. Virtue's grandson, Mr. Herbert Virtue, still possesses the original water-colour sketches from which the engravings were made. It would be pleasant to be able honestly to praise Mr. Wright's arduous labours, but truth demands that praise be rigidly restricted to his intentions. Mr. Wright appears to have had three ideas about Scotsmen and things Scottish—first, that every male head in Caledonia is always covered with a Tam o' Shanter bonnet; second, that the "lugget caup" is never removed from the table; and, third, that every Scotsman is on all occasions accompanied by

a collie dog. Three admirable ideas, but just a trifle wearisome when reiterated through forty pictures. Although many of Mr. Wright's drawings reveal a conscientious study of the poems they are intended to interpret, there is hardly one which can be said to embody the spirit of Burns. His lovers are mostly Byronic youths indulging liberally in mock pathos, and his peasants would pass muster for gentlemen farmers. Who would dream, for instance, that the tenant facing the factor in the "Twa Dogs" picture was "scant o' cash;" he is better dressed and of sleeker aspect than any other tenant in the room.

No one studying the innumerable illustrated editions of Burns can fail to notice what a lamentable deterioration in the artistic quality of the illustrations set in about the year 1860. Probably the abolition of the duty on paper affords some explanation of this unwelcome phenomenon. Whatever the true explanation may be, it is an undoubted fact that the majority of the drawings to Burns subsequent to that date pall upon one for their commonplace sentiment and crudeness of execution. Prior to that date, however, the now veteran artist, Sir John Gilbert, R.A., prepared a series of designs for an edition of the poet, which for vivacity of spirit and honesty of sentiment still claim generous recognition in any account of Burns in art. Few artists have been so successful in rendering the spontaneity of "To a Mountain Daisy," the eerie feeling of the "Address to the De'il," or the restrained self-appreciation of "The Vision." The venerable painter informs me that he does not remember having extended any of his Burns pictures into oil paintings, an omission which every student of the poet cannot but regret. Such pictures as he proved himself competent to produce would have formed fitting companions for Sir David Wilkie's "Duncan Gray" and "The Cottar's Saturday Night."

Recent years have added remarkably little to the artistic interpretation of Burns. During the last decade, for example, how few pictures finding their *motif* in the poet's verse have appeared on the walls of the Royal Academy. In 1884 there was a "Lover's Quarrel," by

Mr. Adrian Stokes, to which the following lines were attached :—

“ Had we never met and parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.”

Lines, it is to be presumed, intended for this quotation from “ *Ae Fond Kiss*,”

“ Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.”

Four years later, that is in 1888, Mr. Thomas Faed, R.A., exhibited a “ *Burns in the Cottage*,” showing a group of peasants listening with eager faces to a reading from the poet’s pages ; and in the Academy of 1891 there was a spirited and modern-toned rendering of “ *Tam o’ Shanter*,” from the brush of Mr. Heywood Hardy. One or two pictures may have been overlooked ; but supposing the number to be doubled, do half-a-dozen paintings in ten years represent the influence of Burns in the world of art ? In reply to a request for a list of such of his pictures as owed their inspiration to Burns, Mr. Thomas Faed courteously wrote :—“ I fear that I can be of little use to you, for I never really illustrated Burns. He is so mighty that I felt I could not approach him by miles by my art. I therefore looked round for subjects that struck a feeling, an original feeling, however feeble. I have painted a ‘ *Burns and Highland Mary*,’ also a ‘ *Burns in the Cottage* ’—a woman reading his glorious verses to her family—but I cannot remember that I ever painted a picture that I could say was an illustration.” It is to be feared that few artists have refrained from attempting Burns for Mr. Faed’s reason—modesty ; in all likelihood the majority have been restrained by a reason now and then darkly hinted—a feeling that Burns was beneath their notice. Such artists make the mistake, as Lamb pithily remarked, of “ confounding the painting of subjects in common or vulgar life with the being a vulgar artist.” The history of art furnishes many examples of how disastrously even great artists have limited the range of their subjects by being indifferent to the claims of literature. They have forgotten the warning of Reynolds that “ a painter stands in need of more knowledge than is to be picked off his pallet. He can never be a great artist who is grossly illiterate.” Neither

does it detract from their fame to owe an inspiration to a poet, for “ invention in painting does not imply the invention of the subject, for that is commonly supplied by the poet or historian.” Perhaps one reason of the paucity of Burns interpretations may be found in Mr. Harry Quilter’s assertion that “ an awful horror of being thought British seems to have seized upon our artists.” It sounds so much finer to declare one’s self a cosmopolitan !

Pessimists contend that it is doubtful whether the artists of the present day are as competent to interpret Burns as the artists of fifty years ago, and, as is usually the case, there is a dash of truth in the contention. This fact alone constitutes a weighty impeachment of present day artistic methods. Whatever unfits an artist to interpret so human a poet as Burns carries its own condemnation. It is not by basking for ever on marble slabs under Grecian skies, or by shedding endless tears over Cleopatra’s fate, or by ceaseless exhibitions of the woes of Perseus and Andromeda, that men will learn to live saner and more wholesome lives ; and so long as these and kindred topics enthrall our artists they must be powerless to interpret the message of a poet so near to nature as Burns. It is to be hoped that the reign of this unhealthy spirit is near its close, and that ere long the creations of the Ayrshire poet, along with those of his brother-bards, will glide into the studios of our artists and clamour for embodiment. It is too much to ask that the school of British art shall reflect the school of British literature, as M. Chesneau was under the impression it did ? The interpretation of Burns, or of any great poet, is not child’s play ; it is a task which would make large demands on the powers of the most gifted artist. Burns drew from nature ; the result remains as the product of nature plus the poet’s individuality ; but he who illustrates the poem has the difficult task of rendering nature at two removes—he has to encounter and overcome the disturbing quality of the poet’s individuality, and of his own personal individuality playing on the previous product. So here is work capable of taxing the profoundest genius. But here is work, too, prepared to the brush of each specialist artist.

In the pages of Burns, Mr. Briton Riviere, that successor of Landseer, will find dumb brutes as worthy of his genius as any that have played a part in classic story ; Mr. W. Q. Orchardson many tragedies of love akin to that perpetuated in his "Alone;" and Mr. Herkomer innumerable texts from which to deduce his sympathy with the hardships of the poor, and his interest in the movement of

humanity. The painter who attempts the interpretation of Burns can need no better tutor than Carlyle's penetrating essay on the poet. That will guide him to the poet's sincerity and truth, will show him the ideal within the actual, and breathe upon his canvas the uncontaminated freshness of the mountain air.

IV.—RHYMIN' ROBIN : AN ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE.

BY ALEX. G. MURDOCH.

" And wear thou this, she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head,
The polish'd leaves and berries red
Did rustling play,
And like a passing thought she fled
In light away."—*The Vision.*

A TARTAN-PLAIDED Muse, yestreen,
As I sat lanely thinkin',
Cam' me, an' my blin' thochts between,
An' set my rhymes a-clinkin'.
Her eyes, like twin stars in the list,
Set a' my pulses throbbin',
The morn said she 's the twenty-fifth,
I hope ye're mindin' Robin ?"

" *The twenty-fifth!* Auld Scotland's pride,
Forget it shall she never ;
But still shall hail its dawn," I cried,
And tell its worth for ever.
For, fighting thro' his life's brief day,
An honest, brave, and true man—
A hero rob'd in odden gray—
Was Burns, the Ayrshire ploughman.

" Are ye," quoth I, " the lady fair
That gart his heart-strings tingle,
As he resolved to rhyme nae mair,
Yon nicht beside the ingle?
The bonnie Muse that gied to him
The laurel wreath o' holly—
A gift that never shall grow dim
Tho' stain'd a wee by folly.

" The same ! for now I recognise
The poet's bright description,
The snaw-white broo, the lustrous eyes,
The clean leg, sae bewitchin'.

And streamin' loose, the pictur'd plyde
That shows the tartan border ;
Ye're welcome to my ingle-side,
And what's the Muses' order ? "

I look'd again, but she was fled—
Gane and awa' thus early ;
But echo rang the words she said,
And, O', they thrill'd me fairly :—
" *The morn's the twenty-fifth,*" said she,
" *I hope ye're mindin' Robin ?*"
And that night, ere I closed an e'e,
Thrang bumm'd my rymin' bobbin' :—

O, Robbie Burns ! O, Robbie Burns !
Dost thou in Heaven hear it ?
Again thy natal day returns,
And Scotland leaps to cheer it.
Her hero spirit catches fire,
Beneath the strong emotion,
As song's bright message thrills the wire
That threads the heart's wide ocean.

And oft, the bonnet aff her brow,
She reads her poet's story—
How he, behind his rustic plough,
Lit fields and streams wi' glory.
With grandeur cloth'd the "Cottar's" hearth,
And with a proud endeavour,
Gave honest Worth, ower a' the earth,
A crown to wear for ever.

Not his the light of Shakespeare's line,
Nor Milton's massive splendour ;
But Scotland rich in Auld Langsyne
Needs naething mair to mend her.
And while a "Daisy" decks the soil,
And while a wrang needs rightin',
The rough, strong-hearted sons of toil,
Shall still his songs delight in.

For Scotland's shining book o' Fame
Records no prouder glory
Than garland's Robert Burns's name,
And tells no manlier story.
Then here's a toast, will ne'er be lost,
While Scottish hearts are throbbin'—
Hip, hip, hurrah—the glorious day
Gied Scotland Rhymin' Robin !

V.—UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF ROBERT BURNS.

BY G. A. AITKEN.

FROM THE "SCOTSMAN," JANUARY 25, 1893.

A FEW weeks ago I felt it my duty to send to the *Evening Dispatch* a description of a number of forged Burns papers which had been offered to me for purchase. I have now the pleasanter task of publishing some interesting letters about whose genuineness there can be no dispute. The greater part of these papers are in the Laing collection in the Edinburgh University Library, and before they came into Dr. Laing's hands they belonged to Sir Walter Scott, and were known to Lockhart when he was writing his "Life of Burns." In the same volume are some notes, by Joseph Train, antiquary and Supervisor of Excise at Castle Douglas, gathered together for Lockhart's use; and there are a few holograph poems. These latter have all been published; but the MSS. offer some new readings, which will be duly recorded in my forthcoming edition of Burns's poems in Messrs. Bell's Aldine Poets. Other new letters here given are from the splendid collection of Mr. Alfred Morrison, and were generally purchased at Mr. Sotheby's rooms. I am much indebted to Mr. Morrison for permission to copy these letters; to the Rev. Eric Robertson for calling my attention to those in the Edinburgh University; and to Mr. Webster, the librarian, for the facilities he afforded me. I have recently shown—in the "Burns Chronicle" for 1893—that a collation of other letters, already published, in Mr. Morrison's collection, confirms the belief that Currie and other early editors took unwarrantable liberty in printing Burns's correspondence; for they not only made

omissions, which was occasionally imperative, but they introduced what were supposed to be verbal improvements. To this matter, I shall have to refer again in the present article.

The earliest in date of the papers in the library of Edinburgh University is a draft letter "To the Rev. Mr. Greenfield, inclosing two songs, the composition of two Ayrshire mechanics," dated December 1786, soon after Burns reached Edinburgh. The paper is endorsed "Burns: Letters to several persons. Sent to Lady H. Don, 26 March, 1787;" and it will be found that several phrases in the letter are, as was often the case, identical with passages in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop of January 15, 1787 (Douglas's "Works of Robert Burns," iv., 192.) The Rev. William Greenfield, Professor of Rhetoric, was one of the first of the literary circle of the city to make Burns's acquaintance. The poet spoke highly of him in his "Journal," but his end was sad (Douglas, vi., 391-395.) Lady Hariot Don—a "divine lady"—was sister to the Earl of Glencairn.

To the Rev. William Greenfield, inclosing two songs, the composition of two Ayrshire mechanics.

REVEREND SIR,—On raking the recesses of my memory the other day, I stumbled on two songs, which I here inclose you as a kind of curiosity to a Professor of the *Belle Lettres de la Nature*, which, allow me to say, I look upon as an additional merit of yours; a kind of bye Professorship, not always to be found among the systematic Fathers and

Brothers of scientific criticism. They were the work of bards such as, I believe, I had better still have seen.

Never did Saul's armour sit so heavy on David when going to encounter Goliath, as does the encumbering robe of public notice with which the friendship and patronage of some "names dear to fame" have invested me. I do not say this in the ridiculous idea of seeming self-abasement and affected modesty. I have long studied myself, and I think I know pretty exactly what ground I occupy, both as a Man and a Poet; and however the world, or a friend, may sometimes differ from me in that particular, I stand for it, in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I am willing to believe that my abilities deserved a better fate than the veriest shade of life; but to be dragged forth, with all my imperfections on my head, to the full glare of learned and polite observation, is what, I am afraid, I shall have bitter reason to repent.

I mention this to you, once for all, merely in the Confessor style, to disburthen my conscience, and that "when proud Fortune's ebbing tide recedes," you may bear me witness, when my babble of fame was at the highest, I stood, un intoxicated, with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward, with rueful resolve, to the hastening time when the stroke of anxious calumny, with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph, should dash it to the ground.—I am, ever, etc.

December, 1786.

The next paper in the Edinburgh University affords an illustration of Currie's methods. It is a draft, dated "Edinr., Feb.", of the letter to Mr. James Dalrymple, of Orangefield, which is given in Douglas's edition (iv., 168), with the conjectural date, November 30, 1786. At the end of the first paragraph Currie omitted the following words:—"Or, to go farther back, as the brave but unfortunate Jacobite clans who, as John Milton tells us, after their unhappy Culloden in Heaven, lay 'nine times the space that measures day and night' in oblivious astonishment, prone weltering on the fiery surge." At the end of the next paragraph, the following words are omitted, after "St. Peter's keys to":—"the h—l-mouthing John Russell

(Burns's 'Black Jock') family prayers in the house of Orangefield, on another brace of bantlings to a certain Bard already overcharged with a numerous issue." The conclusion of the letter, too, is omitted:—"For the blind, mischief-making little urchin of a deity you mention, he and I have been sadly at odds ever since some dog tricks he played me not half a century ago. I have compromised matters with his godship of late by uncoupling my heart and fancy for a slight chace after a certain Edinr. belle. My devotions proceed no farther than a forenoon walk, a sentimental conversation, now and then a squeeze of the hand on interchanging au vieillade, and when peculiar good-humour and sequestered propriety allow—'Brethren, salute one another with a holy kiss.'—S. Paul.

'Kissin' is the key o' love,
An' clappin' is the lock,
An' makin' o's the best thing
That ere a young thing got.'

An auld sang o' my mither's.—I have the honour to be," etc.

This old song, with some alterations, Burns afterwards sent to Johnson for the "Museum" (Douglas, iii. 74).

The next letter, which is without date, was given by Currie, but was so much altered by him that it will be best to print the whole as it stands in the MS. This is the important letter, addressed to the Earl of Glencairn, in which Burns asked for his Lordship's interest to obtain a post in the Excise (Douglas, iv., 319):—

My LORD,—I know your Lordship will disapprove of my ideas in the request I am going to make to you; but I have weighed my situation, my hopes, and turn of mind, and am fully fixed to my scheme if I can effectuate it. I wish to get into the Excise. I am told that your Lordship's interest will easily procure me the grant from the Commissioners; and your Lordship's patronage and goodness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have put it in my power to save the little home that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters from destruction.

My brother's lease is but a wretched one, though I think he will probably weather out

the remaining seven years of it. After what I have given and will give him as a small farming capital to keep the family together, I guess my remaining all will be about two hundred pounds. Instead of beggaring myself with a small, dear farm, I will lodge my little stock, a sacred deposit, in a banking-house. Extraordinary distress, or helpless old age, have often harrowed my soul with fear ; and I have one or two claims on me in the name of father. I will stoop to anything that honesty warrants to have it in my power to leave them some better remembrance of me than the odium of illegitimacy.

These, my Lord, are my views. I have resolved on the maturest deliberation; and now I am fixed, I shall leave no stone unturned to carry my resolve into execution. Your Lordship's patronage is by far the strength of my hopes; nor have I yet applied to anybody else. Indeed, I know not how to apply to anybody else. I am ill qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation, and tremble nearly as much at the idea of the cold promise as the cold denial; but to your Lordship I have not only the honour and the happiness, but the pleasure of being, my Lord, your Lordship's much obliged and deeply indebted humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

P.S.—I have enclosed your Lordship Holy Willie, and will wait on you the beginning of next week, as against then I hope to have settled my business with Mr. Creech.

Burns was to receive one hundred guineas for the copyright of the poems published in 1787, and on the 31st of March—the day upon which orders were issued from the Excise Office for the instruction of Burns in the art of gauging, etc.—the poet wrote to Creech from Mauchline—“As I am seriously set in for my farming operations, I shall need that sum your kindness procured me for my copyright. I have sent the line to Mr. John Somerville, a particular friend of mine, who will call on you ; but as I do not need the sum, at least I can make a shift without it till then. Any time between now and the first of May, as it may suit your convenience to pay it, will do for me.” The money was paid on the 30th of May (Douglas, v., 125),

and in the meantime Burns had decided to make Jean Armour his wife.

The two next letters appear to have been sent to Lady Elizabeth Cunningham :—

ELLISLAND, near DUMFRIES,
22nd Janry., 1789.

MY LADY,—As the officious gratitude of a poor creature, however it may be a little troublesome, can never be disagreeable to a good heart, I have ventured to send your ladyship this packet. That from a dabbler in rhymes I am become a professed Poet ; that my attachment to the Muses is heated into enthusiasm ; that my squalid Poverty is changed for comfortable Independence, is the work of your Ladyship's noble Family. Whether I may ever make my footing good, on any considerable height of Parnassus, is what I do not know ; but I am determined to strain every nerve in the trial. Though the rough material of fine writing is undoubtedly a gift of Genius, the workmanship is as certainly the united effort of labour, attention, and pains. Nature has qualified few, if any, to shine in every walk of the muses : I shall put it to the test of repeated trial whether she has formed me capable of distinguishing myself in any one.

In the first great concern of life, the means, the means of supporting that life, I think myself tolerably secure. If my farm should not turn out well, which after all it may not, I have my Excise Commission in reserve. This last is comparatively a poor resource, but it is luxury to anything the first five-and-twenty years of my life taught me to expect ; and I would despise myself, if I thought I were not capable of sacrificing one little liquorish gratification on the altar of Independence. A little spice of indolence excepted, I thank Heaven there is not any species of dissipation that I cannot set at defiance. The indolent reveries of a bemused mind are indeed the sins that easily beset me ; but, like the noxious vapours that annoy miners, I am afraid they are evils that necessarily rise from my very Profession.

The enclosed Poems are the favours of the Nithsdale Muses. The Piece inscribed to R—— G——, Esq., is a copy of verses which I sent to Mr. Graham of Fintry, with a request for his assistance to procure me an

Excise Division in the middle of which I live. On my return from Edin. last, I found my aged mother, my brothers and sisters, on the brink of ruin with their farm ; and as I am certain the remainder of their lease will be worth holding, I advanced them nearly one-half of my capital to keep their little Commonwealth together, and place them in comfort. My own farm here I am pretty sure will in time do well ; but for several years it will require assistance more than my pocket can afford. The Excise salary would pay half my rent, and I could manage the whole business of the Division without five guineas of additional expense.

I shall be in Edinburgh in about a month, when I shall do myself the honour to inform your Ladyship farther of these to me important matters, as I know your Goodness will be interested in them.

In all my domestic concerns I find myself extremely comfortable. I muse and rhyme, morning, noon, and night ; and have a hundred different poetic plans, pastoral, georgic, dramatic, etc., floating in the regions of fancy, somewhere between Purpose and Resolve. To secure myself from ever descending to anything unworthy of the independent spirit of Man, or the honest pride of Genius, I have adopted Lord Glencairn as my titular Protector—what your scholars call by the heathen name of Dii penates I think it is. I have a large shade of him, with the verses I intended for his picture, wrote out by Butterworth, pasted on the back ; and a small shade of him, both by Miers, set in a gold breast-pin, with the words “Mon Dieu et toi” engraved on the shell. The first I have hung over my Parlour chimney-piece ; the last I keep for gala days. I have often, during this winter, wished myself a great man, that I might, with propriety in the etiquette of the world, have inquired after Lady Glencairn’s health. One of the sons of little men as I am, I can only wish fervently for her welfare ; or in my devout moods, pray for her, in the charming language of Mackenzie, that “the Great Spirit may bear up the weight of her grey hairs, and blunt the arrow that brings them rest.”

I shall not add to this unconscionable letter by a tedious apology, or anything more

than assuring your ladyship that with the warmest sincerity of heartfelt, though powerless gratitude, I have the honour to be, my Lady, your Ladyship’s deeply indebted and ever grateful humble servt.,

ROBT. BURNS.

Ellisland, near Dumfries,
15th May, 1789.

My LADY,—Though I claim the privilege your Ladyship’s goodness allows me of sending you copies of anything I compose in the way of my Poetic Trade, I must not tax you with noticing each of my idle epistles. The inclosed piece pleading the cause of Humanity is for your Ladyship ; the other, a specimen of the Author’s Political Piety, I present with my humble respects to the noble Earl to whom I owe my All.

Though I had no other motive, I would continue to cultivate the acquaintance of the Muses for the sake of having an opportunity of assuring the Noble family of Glencairn with what enthusiasm I have the honour to be the grateful creature of their bounty, and their very humble Servt.,

ROBT. BURNS.

The next letter was also in all probability addressed to Lady Elizabeth Cunningham. Cromeck printed the greater part of it (Douglas, v. 277) as a letter to the Dowager-Countess of Glencairn, and the MS. in the University Library differs constantly from Cromeck’s version. But it is difficult to believe that Burns could send two letters so closely resembling each other to different members of the same family ; and towards the end of the MS. version there is an allusion to Lady Glencairn. It will be best to give this version in full, in order that any who wish may collate it with the text given in the ordinary editions.

Ellisland, 23rd Decr., 1789.

My LADY,—The honour you have done your poor poet in writing him so very obliging a letter, and the pleasure the enclosed beautiful verses have given him, came very seasonably to his aid amid the cheerless gloom and sinking despondency of December weather and diseased nerves. As to forgetting the family of Glencairn, with which you tax me, Heaven is my witness with what

sincerity I could use those simple, rude, but, I think, strongly expressive verses :—

“ If thee, Jerusalem, I forget,
Skill part from my right hand ;
My tongue to my mouth’s roof let cleave,
If I do thee forget,
Jerusalem ! and thee above
My chief joy do not set.”

When I am tempted to do anything improper, I dare not, because I look on myself as accountable to your Ladyship and family. When, now and then, I have the honour to be called to the tables of the great, if I happen to meet with anything mortifying from the stately stupidity of self-sufficient squires, or the luxuriant insolence of the upstart nabobs, I get above the creatures by calling to remembrance that I am patronised by the noble house of Glencairn ; and at gala times, such as New Year’s Day, a christening, or the kirk-night, when my punch-bowl is brought from its dusty corner, and filled up in honour of the occasion, I begin with—*The Countess of Glencairn!* My goodwoman, with the enthusiasm of a grateful heart, next cries—*My Lord!* and so the toast goes on until I end with—*Lady Harriet’s little angel!* whose epithalamium I have pledged myself to write.

When I received your Ladyship’s letter, I was in the act of transcribing the enclosed Poems, such as they are, for you, and meant to have sent them in my first leisure hour, and acquainted you with a late change in my way of life. By the generous friendship of one of the first of men, Mr. Graham of Fintry, I have got the Excise Division in the midst of which I live, and considering my unlucky bargain of a farm, I find £50 per annum, which is now our salary, an exceeding good thing.

People may talk as they please of the ignominy of the Excise ; but what will support my family and keep me independent of the world is to me a very important matter ; and I had much rather that my profession borrowed credit from me, than that I borrowed Credit from my profession. Another advantage I have in this business is the knowledge it gives me of the various shades of human character, and consequently assisting me in my trade as a Poet. Not that I am in haste or the press, as my Lord has been told ; had

it been so I would have been highly wanting to myself not to have consulted my generous noble patron ; but still, to be a poet is my highest Ambition, my dearest Wish, and my unwearied study. I am aware that though I were to give to the world performances superior to my former works, if they were of the same kind the comparative reception they would meet with would mortify me. For this reason I wish still to secure my old friend Novelty, on my side, by the *kind* of my performances. I have some thoughts of the Drama. Considering the favourite things of the day, the two and three act pieces of O’ Keeffe, Mrs. Inchbald, etc., does not your Ladyship think that a Scottish Audience would be better pleased with the Affectation, Whim, and Folly of their own native growth, than by manners which to by far the greatest (number) of them can be only second-hand ? No man knows what Nature has fitted him for until he try ; and if after a preparatory course of some years’ Study of Men and Books, I should find myself unequal to the task, there is no great harm done. Virtue and Study are their own reward. I have got Shakespeare, and begun with him, and I shall stretch a point and make myself master of all the Dramatic Authors of any repute, in both English and French, the only languages which I know.

I ought to apologise to your Ladyship for sending you some of the enclosed rhymes, they are so silly. Everybody knows now of poor Dr. M’Gill. He is my particular friend, and my Ballad on his prosecution has virulence enough if it has not wit. You must not read, Lady Glencairn, the stanza about the Priest of Ochiltree. Though I know him to be a designing, rotten-hearted Puritan, yet perhaps her Ladyship has a different idea of him. The Ode to the Regency Bill was mangled in a newspaper last winter. The Election ballad alludes to our present canvass in this string of Boroughs. I do not suppose their (sic) will be a harder run match in the whole General Election. I have avoided taking a side in Politics. The Song is the only one of the enclosed pieces that I think worthy of being sent to so good a judge as your Ladyship.

I will not add to this tedious epistle more

than to assure your Ladyship with what grateful sincerity I have the honour to be, your Ladyship's highly obliged and most obedient humble servt.,

ROBT. BURNS.

The MS. of a letter to Dr. Moore, written a month after Lord Glencairn's death, is in Mr. Morrison's collection (Douglas, v., 349.) The correct date is "Ellisland, near Dumfries, 28th Feb., 1791." Currie and subsequent editors have spoilt the sense by inserting "no" before "service" in the sentence—"Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have passed that bourn," etc. The following is the passage replaced by Currie, with asterisks:—

What a rocky-hearted, perfidious succubus was that Queen Elizabeth! Judas Iscariot was a sad dog to be sure, but still his demerits sink to insignificance compared with the doings of the infernal Bess Tudor. Judas did not know, at least was by no means sure, what and who that Master was; his turpitude was simply betraying a worthy man who had ever been a good Master to him, a degree of turpitude which has even been outdone by many of his kind since. Iscariot, poor wretch, was a man of nothing at all per annum, and by consequence, thirty pieces of silver was a very serious temptation to *him*. But to give but one instance, the Duke of Q—ry, the other day, just played the same trick to *his* kind Master, tho' his Grace is a man of thirty thousand a year, and come to that imbecile period of life when no temptation but avarice can be supposed to affect him.

The next letter (in Mr. Morrison's collection) is addressed to Mr. Alexr. Coutts, Whitehaven.

DEAR SIR,—I am much your debtor for ye two elegant epistles. I had written you long ago, but I still hoped my Muse would enable me to answer you *in kind*; but the Muses are capricious gipseys, at least I have ever found them so. In the meantime I send you this case (?) like other poor devils who are in debt, to beg a little time—"Have patience and I will pay thee all,"—I shall reprobate my Muse to all eternity, if she do

not very soon inspire me to tell you in verse how sincerely I am, Dr. Sir, Yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

Ellisland, near Dumfis.,

28th April, 1791.

The following letter to Lady Hariot Don—in the Edinburgh University Library—refers to Burns's "Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn." He had previously consulted Lady Elizabeth Cunningham as to the publication of this poem (Douglas, v., 361), but she, it seems, referred him to Lady Hariot Don:—

Ellisland, near Dumfries,

23d Oct., 1791.

MY LADY,—The inclosed is a tribute to the memory of a Man, the memory of whom shall mix with my latest recollection. As all the world knows my obligation to the late noble Earl of Glencairn, I wish to make my gratitude equally conspicuous, by publishing this poem. But in what way shall I publish it? It is too small a piece to publish alone. The way which suggests itself to me is, to send it to the Publisher of one of the most respectable periodical works: *The Bee*, for instance. Lady Betty has referred me to you. The Post is just going, else I would have taken the opportunity of the frank, and sent your Ladyship some of my late pieces.

I have the honour to be, my Lady,

Your Ladyship's grateful humble Servt.,

ROBT. BURNS.

[Then follows the "Lament for the Earl of Glencairn," with this postscript]:—

To Lady Hariot Don, this Poem, not the fictitious creation of poetic fancy, but the breathings of real love from a bleeding heart, is respectfully and gratefully presented by

THE AUTHOR.

Mr. Douglas has given two sentences of a note sent to Miss Fontenelle, of the Dumfries Theatre, in December, 1793 (vi., 94). The draft—in Mr. Morrison's collection—proceeds as follows: perhaps Burns did not copy the whole when he wrote out the letter:—

Were I a man of gallantry and fashion, strutting and fluttering on the foreground of the picture of Life, making this speech to a lovely young girl might be construed to be one of the doings of All Powerful Love; but

you will be surprised, my dear Madam, when I tell you that it is not Love, nor even Friendship, but sheer avarice. In all my justlings and jumblings, windings and turnings, in life, disgusted at every corner, as a man of the least taste and sense must be, with vice, folly, arrogance, impertinence, nonsense and stupidity, my soul has ever, involuntarily and instinctively, selected as it were for herself a few whose regard, whose esteem, [whose hearts (*deleted*)], with a *Miser's Avarice* she wished to appropriate and preserve. It is truly from this cause, ma chere Mademoiselle, that any the least service I can be of to you gives me most real pleasure. God knows I am a powerless individual. And when I thought on my friends, many a heart-ache it has given me! But if Miss Fontenelle will accept this honest compliment to her [lovely person (*deleted*)] personal charms, amiable manners, and gentle heart, from a man too proud to flatter, though too poor to have his compliments of any consequence, it will sincerely oblige her *anxious* Friend, and most devoted humble (servant).

One note in Mr. Morrison's collection is addressed to Mr. Findlater, the Supervisor. There is no date:—

DR. FINDLATER.—Will you give and receive happiness — both very pleasant business — some buts of wine are to use up, you will find Messrs. Simms, Hyslop, and a stranger, to whom you will like to be known. COME!!!

R. B.

Nanie Welsh's.

Burns's friend, Mr. Robert Riddell, of Glenriddell and Friar's Carse, died in April, 1794, and the estate was announced for sale in June. Burns was anxious that Mr. M'Leod (Douglas, iv., 258) should purchase the property, and the steps he took with that object appear from the following letter to that gentleman (Mr. Morrison's MSS.):—

Dumfries, 18th June, 1794.

SIR,—The fate of Carse is determined. A majority of the Trustees have fixed its sale. Our friend, John Clarke, whom you remember to have met with here, opposed the measure with all his might, but he was overruled. He, wishing to serve Walter Riddell, the surviving brother, wanted the widow to take a given

annuity, and make over to him the survivancy of the paternal estate; but, luckily, the widow most cordially hates her brother-in-law, and, to my knowledge, would rather you had the estate, though five hundred cheaper, than that Wattie should. In the meantime Wattie has sold his Woodley park to Colon. Goldie, the last proprietor. Wattie gave £16,000 for it, laid out better than £2000 more on it, and has sold it for £15,000. So much for Master Wattie's sense and management, which, *entre nous*, are about the same pitch as his worth.

The trustees have appointed a gentleman to make out an estimate of the value of the *terra firma* in the estate, which you know is by far the principal article in the purchase; the house and woods will be valued by some professional man. The gentleman they have pitched on is a Mr. Wm. Stewart, factor and manager for Mr. Monteath of Closeburn. Stewart is my most intimate friend, and has promised me a copy of his estimate—but please let this be a dead secret. Stewart was the intimate and confidential friend of poor Riddell that is gone, and will be trusted and consulted in all the business,—and from him I am to know every view and transaction. I assure you it has cost me some manœuvring to bring this to bear; but as this kind of underhand intelligence may and will be of very considerable service to you, if you are still thinking of the purchase, I have in a manner beset and waylaid my friend Stewart, until I have prevailed on him. By this day se'en-night Stewart will have made out his estimate, and against that day you shall hear from me. As soon as the advertisement appears in the papers, which will be, Stewart tells me, in a fortnight or so, I will go over the woods with an acquaintance of mine, who is a twenty years' experienced judge in the way of buying woods; and you shall have the exact value of every stick on the property. I could not go over the estate in that way, you know, until the sale be formally announced. The idea of the Trustees is to bring on the sale in October, so that the purchaser may enter at Martinmas.

Now, my lately-acquired, but much valued and highly honor'd Friend, let me urge you to be in earnest with this business. Here is

positively the most beautiful spot in the lowlands of Scotland; absolutely the masterpiece of Nature in that part of the kingdom, and would you not wish to call it yours? This country is charmingly romantic and picturesque in the whole; 'tis besides highly improving and improvable, and a cheap country to live in. You will be within six miles of the third town for importance and elegance in Scotland; your neighbourhood will abound in "Honest men and bonnie lasses"—do, come and be happy, and make me in particular, and the whole country happy, by adding Mr. M'Leod's worth and Mrs. M'Leod's amiableness—not to speak of their splendid fortune and distinguished rank—to this already deserving and enchanting part of the kingdom.

You see with what selfishness I have the honor to be, Dear Sir,

Your obliged and devoted humble servt.,
ROBT. BURNS.

The following short note—sold at Messrs. Sotheby's rooms in November 1891—was sent to Mr. Thomas Sloan, Dumfries, the friend to whom, in 1791, Burns gave an account of the sale at Ellisland (Douglas, v., 393):—

I am truly sorry, my dear Sir, that my black mare has hurt one of her hind legs so ill that she cannot travel, else she should have been at your service. Many thanks for your attentions. I much wish to see you. I called on Captain Riddell to-day, who inquired kindly for you: he is getting better.

Excuse this brief epistle from a broken arm.
—Yours,

R. B.

P.S.—I have recruited my purse since I saw you, and you may have a guinea or two if you chuse.

A letter to the Mr. William Stewart, of Closeburn Castle, referred to in the letter to Mr. M'Leod, given above, was sold at Messrs. Sotheby's rooms in May last. It is endorsed—"This day forwarded and enclosed in a letter to Mr. Burns, £3 3s. od. st., and for which I hold no security in writing.—WILLIAM STEWART." It is, as the writer says, a painful note.

Dumfries, January 15, 1795.

This is a painful disagreeable letter; and the first of the kind I ever wrote—I am truly

in serious distress for three or four guineas; can you, my dear sir, accommodate me? It will, indeed, truly oblige me. These accursed times, by stopping up importation, have for this year, at least, lopt off a full third part of my income, and with my large family, this to me is a distressing matter.—Farewell, and God bless you.

R. BURNS.

The following letter from James Johnson, editor of the "Musical Museum," was evidently written after the receipt of the letter from Burns of the 29th June, 1794, (Douglas, vi., 134.) It is now in the Edinburgh University Library, and is addressed to "Mr. Robert Burns, Officer of Excise, Dumfries." Burns has himself alluded to the eccentricities of Johnson's spelling (Douglas, vi., 179.)

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Your additional favours with the Durk (?) I receaved, and am ashamed I did not write to you sooner concerning what you requested anent the Songs Mr. Urbani had taken, but I defered till I could inform you that the 5th vol. was actually begun, which is now the case. Mr. Clark has given me some to begin with and he is busie with more he has promised to hold me agoing please accept my warmest thanks for all your kind favours and wishes I could have it in my power, but to serve you, this fresh suply has added new life to me as I was trembling for fear lest we should not make up the Number. I should have been gled to have heard from you along with the parcel but suspect you have been angry with me as I did not answer your last favour. I shall take care to the venerable Relick of Balmerino as soon as possibell—there has been lately published 2 Volumes of Scots Songs in London. I think we might cull a few Songs from them. There is some Songs in it without Tunes which my father and your Humble Servant at least can have. Mr. Clark will take them off. They have been very free in their prafice, they deserve to be prosecuted—there is a Mr. Watland a Music Seller in Edinr. thinks no more sin to take out of the Museum and print them single songs then a begger woudl in taking a halfpeny however my friend I do not mention this that your productions are, or may be bound, but I mention this of Pirots taking without your or our advice and lafing and say-

ing they will take any of them they please and saying I may be thankfull they do not print them all as they have as good a right as me, however I leave this but it would be well done to give a check at home so as to keep those at a distance in some sort of aw.

My Dear friend, I must still beg you to add another favoure, however, I do not know if your delicasy will permit you, but if you would do it, it would be a particular kindness douing me. You know your and my worthy friend Mr. Robt. Riddle had a book of Music engraved by me of which he made a sollemn promise before these Witness, Mr. Stephen Clark, and Mr. Smelie the printer, that if the Book did not pay itself within a limited time he (Mr. Riddle) would pay the Ballance I did write Mrs. Riddle to the same purpose severall mounths ago, I did not choose to press her by a second letter lest it should rise a pang for the Desesed, but would beg of you to mention it in as tender a manner as possibell (you know the properest method) to take her I shall be as easy as possibell and will compromise the Matter in as easy a way as I can the whole Sum for Engraving, printing etc., is £18 10 3, and I am persuaded I have not sold 10 copies; it was against my will to have medled with that publication as I was serten it wuold not sell, and of which Mr. Clark is witness if Mrs. Riddle would make any kind of offer so as to get this business settled, and if she chuse she may have some copies of the Book to give to her acquaintance.

Below is the list of songs Mr. Urbani took out of the British Museum, which he solicited, and I made him welcome. I need not mention the others, as they are to be had almost in every book of Scots Songs. My Father and Wife, who is now moving about, desire to be remembered in the kindest manner to you and Mrs. Burns. And I rest, Dear Friend, your much obliged and Humble Ser.,

JAMES JOHNSON.

[In the list given we find:—"Lord Gregory," which made a great noise in Edinburgh; "I'll lay me down and die," music by a young Lady; "It will not do for us," being property, etc.]

Burns died on the 21st of July, 1796, and

John Lewars, his fellow officer, and the brother of Jessie Lewars, who nursed Burns in his last illness, helped the widow by writing the necessary letters to various friends. The letters given below (or rather copies of them) are all in the Edinburgh University Library. The first is to Mrs. Dunlop, and it is pleasant to find that that lady had resumed her correspondence with the poet in time for him to appreciate her letter.

MADAM,—At the desire of Mrs. Burns I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and at same time inform you of the melancholy and much regretted event of Mr. Burns's death. He expired on the morning of the 21st, after a long and severe illness. Your kind letter gave him great ease and satisfaction, and was the last thing he was capable of perusing or understanding. The situation of his unfortunate widow and family of most promising boys, Mrs. Dunlop's feelings and affection for them will much easier paint than I can possibly express, more particularly when Mrs. Dunlop is informed that Mrs. Burns's situation is such that she is expected to ly in dayly. I am certain that a letter from Mrs. Dunlop to Mrs. Burns would be a very great consolation, and her kind advice most thankfully received.—I am, with the greatest respect, your most obt. and very humble sernt.,

JNO. LEWARS.

Dumfries, 23rd July, 1796.

The next letter is to Captain Crosbie.

SIR,—At the desire of Mrs. Burns I have to acquaint you with the melancholy event of our friend's death. He expired on the morning of 12, abt five o'clock. The situation of the unfortunate Mrs. Burns and her charming boys your feeling heart can easily paint. However, much to the credit of a few of his friends in this place, who have stepped forward with their assistance and advice, and from their respectable connections and situation in life, there can be no doubt of a very handsome provision being raised for his widow and family. Tho' some of these gentlemen have wrote to all the Edin. professors with which either he or Mr. Burns were acquainted, and to several other particular friends, you will easily excuse your not having sooner an answer to your very kind letter of

—instant, with an acknowledgment of the contents, for, at the time it was received Mr. B—— was total unable either to write or dictate a letter, and Mrs. Burns wished to defer answering it till she saw what turn affairs took.—I am, with much respect, your mo. obt. and very humble sernt.

The third letter from Lewars (for Mrs. Burns) is to Burns's cousin, James Burness, of Montrose :—

DEAR SIR,—I was duly favoured with your letter of the 29th ulto. Your goodness is such as to render it wholly out of my power to make any suitable acknowledgment or express what I feel for so much kindness. With regard to my son, I cannot as yet determine, the gentlemen (particularly Dr. Maxwell and Mr. Syme) who have so much interested themselves for me and the family do not wish that I sould come to any resolution with respect to parting with any of the boys, and I own that my own feelings rather incline me to keep them with me. I think they will be a comfort to me, and my most agreeable companions. But should any of them part from me, Mr Burness would be of all others the gentleman under whose charge I should be happy to see him, and I am perfectly sensible of your very obliging offer. Since Mr. Lewars wrote you I have been delivered of a son, who, as well as myself, are doing well. What you mention respecting my brother Gilbert is what accords with my own opinion, and every respect shall be paid to your advice.—Dr. Sir, with the greatest respect and regard, your much obliged friend.

Finally, we have an interesting letter from Burns's friend, William Nicol, teacher at the Edinburgh High School, to "Mr. John Lewars, Officer of Excise, Dumfries," a letter to which Lockhart made some reference.

Edinburgh, Merchant Street,
30th August, 1796.

DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to offer you my sincerest acknowledgements for the early intelligence, though of the most disagreeable and shocking nature, which you communicated to me, on occasion of the premature death of my dearly beloved Burns. I would have made them long before this time, if I

had been capable of writing. But I have been, ever since that time, confined in a great measure to my bed, and highly distressed by a jaundice, combined with some other complaints; but, thanks to God, I have now every mark of convalescence. I was obliged to retire from the town to country quarters at Stockbridge, where, except for an occasional visit to the town, I am determined to reside for some time.

Since the death of our friend, an oppressive gloom, as deep as the darkest shades of night, hangs over me; I can no longer view the face of nature with the same rapture; and social joy is blighted to me for ever. It gives me great pain to see that the encomiums passed upon him, both in the Scotch and English newspapers, are mingled with reproaches of the most indelicate and cruel nature. But stupidity and idiotcy rejoice, when a great and immortal genius falls; and they pour forth their invidious reflections without reserve, well knowing that the dead Lion, from whose presence they formerly scuttled away with terror, and at whose voice they trembled through every nerve, can devour no more.

What has become of Burns's money? He certainly received £600 for the sale of the first edition of his poems, and £100 more for the copyright. He told me that he had advanced near £300 to his brother Gilbert, for the cultivation of his farm in Ayrshire. This affair ought to be strictly investigated, a settlement made, and, in case of non-payment, an assignation to the tack (?) granted to Mrs. Burns. I do not like the aspect of this affair. It is not improbable, such is the depravity of the human heart, that his avarice may tempt him to prefer his own interests to that of the large and unprovided family of his brother. Our friend might lose something by Ellisland, and a trifling sum by his illicit a——s, but still the disappearance of his money remains to be accounted for.

Give my most respectful compliments to Mr. Syme, and tell him, as the subscriptions are going on very slowly here, to write to Dr. John Moore, physician at London, who was a great admirer of Burns, to institute one there. A considerable sum, perhaps, might be procured. . . . (MS. torn) their head,

that dreadful burst of penitential sorrow issued from the breast of our friend before he expired. But if I am not much mistaken in relation to his firmness, he would disdain to have his dying moments disturbed with the sacerdotal gloom, and the sacerdotal bowl. I know he would negotiate wt God alone, concerning his immortal interests.

Give my best compliments to Mrs. Burns, and tell her I shall never (be) wanting to the interests of her (*sic.*) In a word my . . . (MS. torn) shall never see the like of Burns again. His p[owers?] constructed on a

slender, nay almost aerial basis, sho[wed] the most expansive vigour of genius. Where materials would have been wanting perhaps to almost every other mortal, [he] like an electrical kite, soars aloft, and draws down ethereal [fire] from heaven.—I am, dear sir, yours,

WILL NICOL.

This letter gives us a not unpleasant view of Nicol; but the suggestion of mean conduct on the part of Gilbert Burns is to be regretted. Gilbert would, if Mrs. Burns had allowed it, have sold off everything to pay his debt (Chambers, iv., 222).

VI.—BURNS AT KIRKOSWALD.

BY J. A. WESTWOOD OLIVER.

REPRINTED FROM "MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE," JANUARY, 1893.

ALTHOUGH the number of Burns's published letters reaches the goodly total of between three and four hundred, there is one period in his life unrepresented by a single specimen; a period too of exceptional interest, as it may be said to have marked the articulate birth of his poetic genius. I refer to the time immediately following his summer sojourn at the "smuggling village" of Kirkoswald, in his eighteenth year. He went to Kirkoswald, as he has told us in his fragment of autobiography, to attend a noted school there, and to learn something of mensuration, surveying, dialling, etc., studies incontinently interrupted, as it happened, by the discovery of a fair charmer in the garden contiguous to the school-house. On leaving Kirkoswald, he engaged several of his schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with him; and he carried this whim so far, he says, "that though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger." Every scrap of his voluminous correspondence has been lost, although he kept copies of such of his own letters as pleased him. Not even the industry of Mr. Scott Douglas, who has crowned the labours of all previous collectors and annotators of Burns with his six portly volumes, has succeeded in

finding a trace of it. But some time ago there came into my possession a letter, addressed to one of the aforesaid schoolfellows, which may perhaps be regarded as a belated number of the series, and which in any case is interesting as an example of the poet's early epistolatory style. It is dated 1782, six years after the visit to Kirkoswald, and is addressed to Thomas Orr, of Park, near that place, a young farmer who was in the poet's confidence with regard to his juvenile love-affair, and who occasionally came over to Lochlie to assist the family. Mr. Douglas has printed two letters to this individual; one an extremely laconic communication from William Burns, the poet's father, relative to the shearing (dated September 8th, 1780), and the other a short letter from the poet himself on the more interesting subject of Miss Peggy Thomson. As the letter is dated November 11th, 1784, it would seem that the "charming fillette," who upset his trigonometry in 1776, had a more enduring hold on his susceptible heart than most of his early loves. In chronological order the following letter immediately succeeds the five letters to Miss Ellison Begbie and the one written by the poet while at Irvine to his father, and therefore ranks among the earliest of his letters extant.

DEAR THOMAS,—I am to blame for not returning you an answer sooner to your kind letter. But such has been the backwardness of our harvest, and so seldom are we at Ayr that I have scarcely had one opportunity of sending a line to you. I was extremely delighted with your letter. I love to see a man who has a mind superior to the world and the world's men, a man who, conscious of his own integrity, and at peace with himself, despises the censures and opinions of the unthinking rabble of mankind. The distinction of a poor man and a rich man is something indeed, but it is nothing to the difference between either a wise man or a fool, or a man of honour and a knave.

" What is't to me, a Passenger, God wot,
Whether my vessel be first-rate or not ;
The ship itself may make a better figure,
But I who sail am neither less nor bigger."

—POPE.

I have nothing further to say to you but go on and prosper, and if you miss happiness by enjoyment you will find it by contented resignation. Write me soon and let me know how you are to be disposed of during the winter, and believe me to be ever your sincere friend,

ROBERT BURNS.

LOCHLIE, Nov. 17th, 1782.

There can be no doubt about the genuineness of this letter. Apart from the handwriting, which is easily recognisable, it bears the stamp of Burns in every line. But I may as well relate its history. It came into my father's possession, among other papers relating to the poet, about fifty years ago. He was then schoolmaster of the " noted school" of Kirkoswald, and I believe the documents were given to him by the relatives or descendants of Thomas Orr. The packet originally contained two or three of the poet's letters, a letter from his father William Burns, and some scraps of paper with verses written on them. What has become of the other letter (or letters) from Burns I do not know, unless it was returned to the surviving kinsfolk of Thomas Orr in Ayrshire; but the letter from his father is now in the possession of Dr. David Murray of Glasgow.

Any poetical pieces found in association with letters from Burns necessarily excite some lively hopes, for it was the habit of the

poet all his life long to send copies of his lyrics to correspondents up and down the country. The verses, however, to which I have referred as being tied up with the letters, are clearly not of that order. They are in the handwriting (presumably) of Thomas Orr, and on one of the leaves appears Thomas Orr's signature. The obvious conclusion is that Orr must have been himself a rhymer, and I would fain have remained satisfied with that conclusion, as my late father did; but there are some considerations which point to the suspicion (if nothing more) that one of the pieces may be a copy, made by Orr, of some juvenile effort of Burns's own muse. Love and poetry were ever, with him, in the close relationship of cause and effect. All his best lyrics were inspired by one or the other of the numberless goddesses who successively ruled his fickle heart, from sonsie Nelly Kilpatrick downwards. This Nelly Kilpatrick, who helped him to bind sheaves in the harvest-field, was his calf-love, and to her he made his first song, written at the age of fifteen, the one beginning,

" O once I loved a bonnie lass."

His first real attachment, however, so far as history relates, was inspired by the charms and accidental proximity of Peggy Thomson at Kirkoswald, and the circumstances of its birth had better be given in his own words: "I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo,—a month which is always a carnival in my bosom—when a charming filette, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the spheres of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my sines and co-sines for a few days more; but stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel,—

' . . . Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower. . . . '

It was vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I stayed I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guilt-

less." (*Autobiographical Letter to Dr. Moore, 1787.*) Although he "crazed the faculties of his soul" about her, it has not hitherto been supposed that his frenzy bore immediate fruit in verse. The fine song beginning,

" Now westlin winds and slaughter'ring guns
Bring autumn's pleasant weather,"

while, on the poet's own confession, inspired by this nymph of the garden, and founded on a previous rough draft which may or may not have been contemporaneous with the episode, was not written until the year 1783, at which time he seems to have experienced a revival of his old sentiment for the damsel. In the narrative describing the circumstances of his meeting with Peggy Thomson, it will be observed that she was "like Proserpine gathering flowers, herself a fairer flower," and that he speaks in enthusiastic terms of her "modesty and innocence." It is therefore at least curious that these attributes should give their "note" to the following highly floral verses :—

" Serene is the morn, the lark leaves his nest
And sings a salute to the dawn,
The sun with a splendour embroiders the east
And brightens the dew on the lawn.

Whilst the sons of debauch to indulgence give way
And slumber the prime of their hours,
Let us, my dear Stella, the garden survey
And make our remarks on the flowers.

The gay gaudy tulip observe as you walk,
How flaunting the gloss on its vest,
How proud and how stately it stands on its stalk
In beauty's diversity drest.

From the rose, the carnation, the pink and the clove,
What odours incessantly spring.—
The south wafts a richer perfume to the grove
As he brushes the leaves with his wing.

Apart from the rest, in her purple array,
The violet humbly retreats ;
In modest concealment she peeps on the day,
Yet none can excel her in sweets.

So humble, that though with unparalleled grace
She might e'en a palace adorn,
She oft in a hedge hides her innocent face,
And grows at the foot of thorn.

So beauty, my fair one, is doubly refined
When modesty brightens her charms,—
When meekness like thine adds a gem to her mind,
We long to be locked in her arms.

Though Venus herself from her throne should descend,
And the Graces await at her call,
To thee the gay world would with preference bend,
And hail thee the violet of all."

On reading these verses one is at once struck by their directness and simplicity, so different from the prevailing mode of the time. The songs and stanzas to be found in all the miscellanies and poetical keepsakes of popular vogue are stiff with an elaborate embroidery of personified attributes, Chloes, Strephons, Phyllises, and so forth. The writer therefore, whoever he may have been, must have tuned his lyre to the note of nature, an achievement by no means easy before Burns himself showed the way.

An examination of the verses in detail reveals one or two interesting points. In the second stanza we have the desperately prosaic lines,

" Let us, my dear Stella, the garden survey,
And make our remarks on the flowers."

Burns's song, "Now westlin winds," as already remarked, was inspired and probably drafted at Kirkoswald, and in it we find a similar thought :

" Come let us stray our gladsome way,
And view the charms of nature."

Compare also the first stanza above with this from Burns's "Lass of Cessnock Banks," written probably about 1780 :

" She's sweeter than the morning dawn,
When rising Phœbus first is seen ;
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn ;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish e'en."

" The Ploughman's Life," given by Cromek as Burns's, begins,

" The lav'rock in the morning shall rise from her nest."

The authenticity of these lines, however, is disputed.

It may be worth remarking that Shenstone's "Rural Elegance" opens with the lines,

" While orient skies restore the day,
And dewdrops catch the lucid ray,"

which are an ornate and Shenstonian version of

" The sun with splendour embroiders the east
And brightens the dew on the lawn."

And oddly enough, during the summer at Kirkoswald, Shenstone was one of Burns's favourite authors. "I returned home," he says, "very considerably improved. My

reading was enlarged by the very important additions of Thomson's and Shenstone's works." To Shenstonian influence might also be ascribed, on the theory that Burns did write these verses, the most un-Burns-like address to "Stella." Burns generally (in his earlier songs invariably) hailed his heroines by their real name, Jean, Peggy, Nannie, Mary, etc., if he named them at all; but the elegant Shenstone would not have thought he was writing poetry unless he rechristened them with names having the sanction of classic usage. That Burns, at this early period, was not above the influence of his masters in verse, is proved by the circumstance that his stanzas, "I dreamed I lay where flowers were springing," the only known poetical product of his year at Kirkoswald, are a close imitation, both in sentiment and expression, of Mrs. Cockburn's "Flowers of the Forest," which appeared in several of the popular collections of songs about that time.

Once more, in the lines of the second verse,
" Whilst the sons of debauch to indulgence give way
 And slumber the prime of their hours,"

we have a touch of local colour which is highly suggestive. Kirkoswald, at the time of the poet's sojourn, was notorious for smuggling and drunkenness, and he has recorded that although, "Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were, till this time, new to me. . . . I was no enemy to social life," and, "Here I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble." The idea of introducing a reference to drunken debauchery in a set of amatory verses would surely never have occurred to any one unless the debauchery was a very salient and aggressive feature of the neighbourhood.

I offer these suggestions for what they are worth. It is a comparatively easy matter to build up a case by citing resemblances and possible coincidences; but whatever value may be attached to the considerations I have stated, it must not be forgotten that these interesting verses were preserved in company with undoubtedly authentic letters of the poet and his father, that they are in the handwriting and were in the possession of a man who, so far as we know (and Burns's correspondence

with him would surely have given some hint of the fact had it been otherwise), was not himself a rhymer, and lastly that they apply with singular aptness to the heroine of the love affair in which this man was the poet's confidant.

In attempting to decide for or against Burns's authorship of the verses (an attempt which I do not make) it is necessary to bear in mind an alternative explanation of their origin. Mr. Alexander Smith, in his *Globe* edition of the poet's works, printed a curious "Elegy" which he found in the then recently recovered common-place book presented by Burns to Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop. The Elegy, copied in the poet's handwriting, was introduced in these words: "The following poem is the work of some hapless unknown son of the Muses, who deserved a better fate. There is a great deal of 'The Voice of Cana' in his solitary mournful notes; and had the sentiments been clothed in Shenstone's language, they would have been no discredit even to that elegant poet." Between the Elegy and the verses I have given there is no intrinsic resemblance, beyond the occurrence in both of the name "Stella." Burns might have got the name "Stella" (Swift's works do not appear to have been included in his early reading) from this poem, which seems to have been a favourite with him; but on the other hand, he and his friend Orr may have had access in common to some collection of verses, now unknown, from which they each drew their extracts. Were the resemblance between the two pieces closer, this theory would be an extremely plausible one. As it is, the possibility of such an explanation has to be taken into account.

The second manuscript, a scrap of roughly ruled music-paper with the writing on the back, presents a problem which is to me insolvable. It is in the same handwriting as the other manuscript, but while the spelling in that is correct, in this it is abominable. The lines are described as "An Elegy on Archibald, Duke of Argyle, who died at London, 15th of April, 1761." Now as Thomas Orr was born in that very year 1761, it is obvious that, the Elegy cannot be his, or that it must have been composed a considerable time after the Duke's death. Here are

the lines exactly as they stand, innocent of punctuation :—

“ A solemn dirge ye bage pipes blow
 Let hills and dales resound the woe
 Ye rocks who guard the western shore
 Your potent Duk is now no mor
 Snach’d off by death when ripe in years
 His mem’ry claims his countrys tears
 A stets man great and good likewies
 Among the unthinkin dead now lies
 No mor hil schem his countrys well
 No mor at court our plaints hell tell
 No more hell spend the silent night
 To meditate his countrys right
 No mor for Scotland hell provide
 Nor by sage counsel Britain guide
 His politics now at an end
 Nor mor his country will defend.”

The existence of such an illiterate production, in Thomas Orr’s hand-writing, is hardly reconcilable with the authorship of the lines to Stella ; and the only interest of the paper lies in the indirect evidence it affords that its neighbour, though bearing Orr’s name, must have been a copy of the work of another pen.

It may not be amiss to note, in conclusion, as bearing upon the probability of some of Burns’s early work being still undiscovered, that he distinctly indicates the existence of many rhymes written before his twenty-third year, which had not been given to the world in his own day, and which have not been discovered since. In the oft-quoted letter to Dr. Moore, he says: “ My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. . . . Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind, but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half-a-dozen or more pieces on hand ; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme ; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet ! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except ‘ Winter : a dirge,’ the eldest of my printed pieces ; ‘ The Death of Poor Maillie,’ ‘ John Barleycorn,’ and Songs first, second and third.” Clearly “ half-a-dozen or more pieces on the stocks at once,” points to a degree of productiveness in his youthful days of which we have but scant record in his surviving works.

Almost all our knowledge of the sojourn at Kirkoswald is drawn from Burns’s own allusions to it in the letter to Dr. Moore. The very date of it has become surrounded by some uncertainty and confusion, not through any want of clearness in Burns’s own statement on the point, but through the difficulty of reconciling different parts of his somewhat incoherent narrative. Burns distinctly says that he spent his “ seventeenth summer ” at the “ noted school,” and as he was born in January, 1759, his seventeenth “ summer,” corresponding to his eighteenth year, was in 1776, the year previous to the “ flitting ” of the family from Mount Oliphant, near Ayr, to the larger farm of Lochlie in the parish of Tarbolton. Dr. Currie altered “ seventeenth ” to “ nineteenth or twentieth,” to suit his own chronology ; and Gilbert Burns, the poet’s brother, seems to have been a pliable witness in the matter of dates. The period was an exceedingly important one in the young poet’s mental development, and it held even more important issues in the subsequent career of the man. It gave the lad his first experience of independence and of emancipation from the rigid rule of the home. It introduced him for the first time to scenes of noisy conviviality and good fellowship, in which he was nothing loath (and was for the time being free) to join ; thus it may be laying the basis of the habit that was destined to darken with its shadow the whole course of his after life. It saw the stirrings of literary ambition, and the production of one or two of his earliest lyrics. And, finally, it culminated in the first of those love-paroxysms that continued to disturb his peace and upset his philosophy almost to the last, and that played such an extraordinary part in the expression of his lyric genius. Fortunate it is, therefore, that a period so fateful has not been left altogether without record. The poet’s account of it is all too brief and shadowy, but as no other evidence is available, we must perforce be content.

Kirkoswald (locally called Kirkos’l) is no longer a scene of “ roaring dissipation and swaggering riot,” but a singularly quiet, peaceful, law-abiding village. It has preserved its old-world aspect to this day, and beyond sobering down to respectability and obscurity,

is probably much the same place that Burns knew in 1776. According to Chambers, who made his researches on the spot, the classes which Burns attended were temporarily held (owing to the destruction of the proper school-house) in a house in the main street of the village, opposite the church-yard. Each house is provided with a long strip of garden, or kail-yard, running up the slope at the back, and it was here that the young poet espied, on the other side of the fence, the "Proserpine gathering flowers," of his lively fancy. The practical Chambers surmises that the damsel was more likely engaged in cutting a cabbage for the family dinner. The

school (rebuilt) now stands at the end of the straggling village street. A sedate and prosperous-looking farm-steading bears the name of "Shanter," but beyond the name it would seem to have no connection with the home of the immortal "Tam," which has completely disappeared.*

Burns's stay at Kirkoswald was too short and uneventful to endow the spot with the associations dear to pilgrims. Keats visited it in the course of his walking tour in 1818, but very few of the ordinary tourists in the "Land of Burns" so much as know its name, and fewer still disturb its peaceful quiet.

VII.—BURNS' BIRTHDAY SONG.

BY ALEXANDER LOWSON.

We homage pay to patriots true,
Who for our good would shed their gore.
We honour give to warriors too,
Who keep the foe from Scotia's shore.
We all adore the statesmen great
Who steer the realm thro' ocean's wild,—
Then let us not forget the debt
We owe to Scotia's darling child.

Chorus—Then let us welcome aye the day,
His natal day as it returns,
The 25th o' Januar' grey,
That saw the birth o' Robbie Burns.

He taught us songs o' magic worth,
Of love and truth and manhood strong,
Now freedom circles round the earth
Embalmed in matchless Robbie's song.

His "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled"
Made tyrants tremble in his day,
And Freedom proudly lifts her head,
Inspired by Robin's matchless lay.

Chorus—Then let us, etc.

The loves, the joys o' lowly swains
He painted true beyond compare.
While blood flows through our Scottish veins
We'll sing these sangs o' genius rare;
While mountains wear their caps o' snaw,
While flowerets bloom or birdies sing,
While grass grows green, or Boreas blaw,
We'll honour Scotia's Poet King.

Chorus—Then let us, etc.

* A controversy has recently arisen regarding the original of this famous character. All commentators have taken it for granted that the poet's model was one Douglas Graham, a Kirkoswald farmer of convivial habits, who often on his way home from Ayr passed Alloway Kirk in the condition of the luckless Tam. Graham himself is said to have acknowledged the portrait. A rival claimant has however been discovered in the person of a labourer named Thomas Reid, who early in the century worked on the estate of the late Mr. Lee-Harvey at Lochwinnoch. This man, who came from Ayrshire, seems to have passed among his contemporaries for the veritable Tam. It is difficult to see how at this time of day the matter can be satisfactorily decided; nor indeed is it of any real importance.

VIII.—TRANSLATIONS OF BURNS.

BY J. YOUNG.

REPRINTED FROM THE "GLASGOW HERALD."

TRANSLATIONS of Burns in a complete form are but few, whilst foreign renderings of his songs and ballads or detached pieces are by no means so numerous as might be expected. These translations, such as they are, have not attracted much attention in this country, where, indeed, they are comparatively unknown. This fact was pretty conclusively shewn by the interest evinced some months ago on the appearance of an article in the *Herald* treating of De Wailly's French translation, a work which, although published half a century ago, evidently possessed the charm of novelty for not a few. From the correspondence which in due course followed the publication of the article it was apparent that the subject is one of no little interest, and this present anniversary may perhaps offer a fitting opportunity for further comment on the difficulties which the translator has to encounter in attempting to reproduce the Scotch poet in a foreign idiom.

With regard to De Wailly's "Burns," it is now somewhat late in the day to enter into the question of its merits or demerits. Whether the adoption of literal blank verse were the best or not for a French translation, it certainly is the easiest; but what would Burns have thought of the matter? From what he has repeatedly said in his correspondence regarding his method of composition—and to this subject further reference will presently be made—there can be no doubt that our poet would have been much pained, to put it suavely, on beholding his works in this French guise.

Carlyle, in the course of some rather favourable comments on Heintze's German translation, wrote:—"Perhaps the one counsel I would venture to give Herr Heintze were this; in all cases to *learn the tune first*." And Burns himself says:—"Until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing (such as it is), I can never compose for it." "Burns in French," judged by this standard, is an impossibility. In German the thing is

feasible to some extent; in fact, over a score of more or less competent translators have produced versions in that language adapted to the tunes with which the songs are identified in the original. But a knowledge of the tune is not enough. Carlyle evidently did not think it needful to observe that such knowledge should be supplemented by an exact understanding of the meaning of the words, yet, judging by results, this additional recommendation were by no means superfluous. A pitfall for the translator of Burns is found in those words, which, although common to English and Scots, have not always the same meaning. For instance, some time ago a Burns enthusiast, writing in these columns, rejected as spurious a third verse of "Of a' the airts," on account of Jean's being therein somewhat prosaically described as "neat and clean," an expression which—according to the writer—Burns would have studiously avoided. Nevertheless, in the song "O, were I on Parnassus' hill!" the line is found:—

"Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean."

And on referring to the glossarial index of the *Globe* edition it will be seen that "clean" here means "handsome." Should the foreigner err in such a case as this he is to be excused. The true meaning of this word did not escape De Wailly, who renders the expression, "*tes membres si élégants*." Heintze avoids the apparently objectionable allusion by substituting "round," "dein Bein so rund," but other German translators keep clear of it by periphrase; Laun, for example, has—"Den Mund so roth, den Wuchs so fein." "Ca'" is another case in point, and in "Ca' the yowes to the knowes" De Wailly has been tripped by this word. His rendering:

"Appelle les brebis sur les hauteurs,"

shows that he has mistaken "ca'" for "call," but in this he is not alone. Laun translates it—

" Ruf' die Lämmer auf die Weide,
Ruf' sie zur beblümten Haide,
Lass an's Bächlein gehn uns beide,
Komm, mein süßes Mädchen."

Otto Baisch also renders the line, "Ruf' die Lämmer," but no Scotsman required to be told that "Ca' the yowes" means "drive the ewes," as correctly translated by Heintze—"Treib die Schafe nach dem Ried." And Legerlotz—whose German translation of Burns's songs, published two or three years ago, contains a considerable number done into dialectical form—has reproduced not only the right meaning of "ca'" but also the double rhyme of the first line—

" Treib zum Bühl dei Schogewühl!
Heid und Moos gibt Weid und Pfuhl,
Und das Brünnli rauscht so kühl,
Schätzli, mei treueigons."

"Ca'" is used elsewhere by Burns in this same sense. In "The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie" the farmer is told he should never tie up his sheep,

" But ca' them out to park or hill,"

and in this instance De Wailly gives the correct rendering—"Mais de les mener au parc ou à la montagne," but the occurrence of "ca'" in the compound word "new-ca'd" (*i.e.*, newly driven) in the opening line of one of the Epistles to John Lapraik, has led the translator to give a rendering which is likely to be novel to most of the poet's readers. The line,

" While new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake."

is translated, "Tandis que les vaches qui viennent de vêler mugissent au poteau"—that is, "While the cows which have just calved low at the stake!" Of course there is authority of a sort for this strange reading of the word—Cuthbertson's Glossary, for instance—or the idea would probably not have occurred to De Wailly, but until it be shown that calving is confined to the "hour on e'enin's edge" it may confidently be asserted that "new-calved" for "new-ca'd" in this stanza is a flagrant absurdity. But this is perhaps excelled by Laun's rendering of the well-known lines in the "Cotter's Saturday Night"—

" But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food : "

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which are delightfully mistranslated as follows:—

" Schon lädt die Tafel ein zum kleinen Mahle
Mit einem Rebhuhn, wie's dem Scotten frommt," where "parritch" is translated "partridge!" *Toujours perdrix* with a vengeance. The *fons erroris* is evidently the apparent similarity of the word to the Scots "paithick." But what could the translator have been thinking about? He must surely have known that the Scots, in Burns's time at least, were more accustomed to a daily dose of stirabout than to the diurnal partridge. Laun is also responsible for the lines:—

" Mein Vater war ein Bauermann,
Wo Carricks Fluahen Wogen,"

where "Upon the Carrick border" is rather poetically mistranslated "Where Carrick's waters surge."

In a letter to G. Thomson, Burns stated that it was his way to consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to his idea of the musical expression, then to chose his theme. This letter contained the manuscript of "Auld Lang Syne," which Burns terms "a song of the olden times"—a definition which should not be lost sight of by intending translators. "The song," says the poet, "has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing." Notwithstanding this assertion, the second, third, and fourth verses are attributed to Burns himself. Now, in view of the circumstances in which the song was composed the Gallic idea lately expressed in the *Herald* that it were best done into French "by adopting a somewhat humourous style" does not strike the Scot as it strikes the stranger. "Auld Lang Syne" humorous! Fancy a compatriot of the author of "L'Ami MacDonald" imagining that a couple of "auld acquaintance" should not be in dead earnest in contemplating the banging of the price of a couple of pints, although, as has been pointed out somewhere, the singer, with national canniness, suggests that his companion should take the initiative in the matter of finance,

" And surely ye'll be your pint stoup,
And surely I'll be mine."

These lines are rendered by De Wailly:—

" Et à coup sûr vous tiendrez votre pinte,
Et à coup sûr je tiendrai la mienne,"

in which, said a critic, "the translator has caught the idea completely." Now, these French lines mean simply that "we twa" intend to pledge each other glass in hand, which, it need hardly be said, is not the generally accepted reading of the original.

The difficulty—if not the impossibility—of writing such a translation of Burns's songs as would have satisfied the poet may perhaps be estimated from the following remark contained in a letter which he wrote to G. Thomson on 1st December, 1792 :—

" ' For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither.' (Such a person as she is.)
This is, in my opinion, more poetic than
' Ne'er made sic anither.' " He adds, it is true, that it is immaterial, but the observation, taken in conjunction with what has already been said as to his method of composition, shows the futility of endeavouring to reproduce Burns's songs in a *French* dress whilst preserving the metrical form of the original. The two methods of metrical translations of the first verse of one of Burns's *English* songs, "My Heart's in the Highlands." The first is a fair example of Laun's German translation ; the other, in Italian, was published in a Milan paper some time ago, and was reproduced by *Notes and Queries* with the remark that it seemed to be extremely well done :—

" MEIN HERZ IST IM HOCHLAND.

Mein Herz ist im Hochland, mein Herz ist nicht hier,
Mein Herz ist im Hochland und jagt im Revier.
Es jagt dort im Walde und folget dem Reh ;
Mein Herz ist im Hochland, whoin ich auch geh."

" IL MIO CUORE E SUI MONTI.

Vola a' miei monti il cor nè mai qui resta,
Vola a' miei monti il cor del cervo a caccia,
Vola il cervo a cacciare della foresta,

De capriuolo ad inseguir la traccia :
Ovunque io l' orme imprima
Sempre il mio core è de' miei monti in cima."

In the first of these instances the song can be sung to the tune for which it was composed ; in the other this is of course impracticable, the Italian version being cast in what appeared to the translator the form in which the best poetical expression could be obtained. The result is a charming translation of the song, but the translated song is not Burns. It may be mentioned by the way that the original of the stanza just quoted is said to have been taken from a small ditty entitled "The Strong Walls of Derry." Whilst Burns in French must be regarded as an impossibility, it cannot be said that Teutonic translations altogether satisfactory are to be met with. Is it even possible to translate Burns's Scottish songs into English ? One of his German translators believes that much of the charm of Burns's poetry is due to the exuberance of endearing diminutives in the Scottish language, and this difficulty, insuperable to the English translator, is almost as insurmountable to the German.

In the course of the correspondence resulting from the article already referred to, a writer blamed De Wailly for having inserted in his translation four lines which Burns himself wished to be forgotten. Seeing that the writer not only reproduced the lines, but also pointed out where the original might be consulted, the purpose of the objection is not very evident. In any case De Wailly should have got credit *per contra* for the omission on page 279 of eight lines which are very much more objectionable than those to which exception had been taken.

IX.—SONG FOR A BURNS ANNIVERSARY.

BY WILLIAM THOMSON.

He came to us when Scotland's bards
Had lost their manly tone ;
When Scotland's nobles sought rewards
For flattery of a throne ;
And raised them to a purpose high,
In songs the world will ne'er let die.

What truth and tenderness combine ;
What power and pathos in each line ;
What varied subjects claim his dreams ;
The banks and braes, the flowing streams,
The little mouse, the piping thrush,
The daisy 'neath the ploughshares crush !
The love of brother, bard and friend,

The love of Mary and bonny Jean,
 The scene in cottage home at night
 That sets the lamp of love alight,
 His heart was love, his strains reveal
 He had no hate e'en for the Diel.

Not in the little land alone
 That gave the poet birth ;
 His songs are sung, his name is known
 O'er all the sea-girt earth.
 Across the broad Atlantic's wave ;
 In lands Pacific waters lave ;
 And from these distant climes,
 Men who have loved his rhymes,
 Have to the little green churchyard
 With reverent footsteps come,
 And with low bending head,
 In loving sorrow shed
 A tributary tear upon our Burns's tomb.
 Since first he saw the light,
 Long years have ta'en their flight,
 And wrong has striven with right,
 And battles have been fought, and lost, and
 won,
 And the earth has less of night and more of sun
 But the bright laurel green
 Around his brow, is brighter now
 Than it in all the years gone by has been.

Come, then, all loyal-hearted Scots,
 "From Maidenkirk to John o' Groats'"
 On this our poet's natal day, and worship at
 his shrine,
 Sing loud his never dying lays,
 And weave of everlasting bays
 A newer wreath around his noble temples to
 entwine ;
 And sing his name and deathless fame
 When the Januar' winds are sighing.
 The Bard is dead, his soul has fled,
 But his song is never dying.

While breezes soft the sweet blue bell shall
 woo ;
 While on our moors upstirs the sturdy
 thistle ;
 While at the gates of heaven the laverock's
 whistle ;
 While woman trusts to man, and man is true ;
 While o'er the "Banks and braes o' Bonny
 Doon"
 The rich-sanged mavis darts ;
 While heather scents the smiling summer
 noon,
 Will Burns live in our hearts ;
 And ever as his natal day returns,
 Our hearts will tribute pay to glorious Burns.

X.—THE PROSE OF BURNS.

FROM "THE SCOTSMAN," DECEMBER 10, 1887.

It is hardly wrong to say that Burns knew good English only from books, and practised it only on paper. He was not in the way of hearing it spoken, and he was not in the habit of speaking it. It was comparatively unknown to him as speech. He was never in England to make profitable acquaintance with it as a living language, and the educated Englishman, visiting Scotland, did not often bring the sound of it to his ear. The cultured of his own country, with whom for one brief season he occasionally associated, did not speak it, we may venture to say, as purely as they wrote it—a jealous Englishman might add that they did not always write it quite purely either. Certainly they professed a great belief in English as the distinctive

speech of good society, and in their exalted moods rather despised the vernacular as little other than a pagan *patois*; but one has the suspicion that they put on their high English with their company clothes, and found relief and a sense of freedom in putting it off again. Even while allowing that Mackenzie, Stewart, Robertson, Blair, and Greenfield spoke English as well as they wrote it, we may yet venture to believe that Edinburgh society a hundred years ago practised a mode of speech which was no nearer to good English than French of Stratford-atte-Bow to French of Paris. The vocabulary in fashionable use might be mainly English, but Scottish idioms would abound, and the northern accent be all-prevailing.

Whatever the state of "society" language in Edinburgh in 1786-7, the influence of Burns himself was, so far, adverse to the use of English, and in favour of Scottish word and idiom. He came willingly to learn of fashionable society the speech of England, and found himself their teacher giving them lessons in the use of their mother-tongue. They listened, applauded, quoted him. He arrested for a time the slow and irregular revolution that was going on in the native speech, and made the native speech temporarily fashionable. His "poems in the Scottish dialect" seasoned the talk of the town. "The language that I had begun to despise as fit for nothing but colloquial vulgarity seemed to be transformed by the sorcery of genius into the genuine language of poetry. It expressed every idea with a brevity and force, and bent itself to every subject with a pliancy in which the most perfect languages often fail." These were the words of an educated contemporary of Burns, and they expressed the feeling and the judgment of every cultured Scotsman who read the poems.

It is more especially true of the youth of Burns, that his knowledge of English was practically and almost solely derived from books. Those who influenced him in the pursuit of this knowledge were his father, his schoolmaster, and a few of his schoolfellows. From none of them could he derive much direct help in the formation of a good style of English composition. His father's conversation, no doubt, stimulated him to a habit of vigorous and independent thought, which was not without its value, but the bent of mind of the elder Burns was toward the exact sciences, amongst which we may include Calvinistic divinity, and turned but little, if at all, towards the elegancies and refinements of artistic expression. It was with facts and ideas the old man dealt: words and phrases were no more to him than the mere wrappers of thought, to be flung aside on receipt of the parcel. His hard life seems to have taken all the poetry, and all the feeling for it, out of his nature. To the charm of literary grace he was probably insensible. The influence of the lad Murdoch upon the education of Burns was considerably more to the purpose.

His *method*, so far as it went, was good. It was enlightened beyond the general practice of his own and many a subsequent day. It may be questioned, indeed, whether the most approved modern method of dealing with an English classic in our junior schools is much in advance of Murdoch's. He taught his pupils to re-arrange rhetorical inversions in the natural order of prose, to express the original in a paraphrase of their own words, and to recite the more poetical passages. The value of the method, like the value of a tool, would be, however, in its application. To produce the best results it would require knowledge, discrimination, and taste in the teacher. Whether young Murdoch was possessed of these qualifications in any noteworthy degree may be doubted. It should be remembered that he was only some seventeen or so when he was engaged by William Burns, in a hostelry in the town of Ayr, to teach the little school of five families at Alloway. Under his tuition the boy Robert Burns became acquainted with a large number of English words, stored his memory with numerous quotations, and learned to express himself with fluency. He also learned the rules of grammar, and made such proficiency in the fruitless exercise of *parsing* as to become—so he tells us himself with some self-complacency—quite an adept in "substantives, verbs, and particles" before he was ten. All this schoolboy proficiency had but slight bearing on the art of composition.

The influence of his schoolfellows began after schooldays were over, and was communicated in the course of a correspondence with them on subjects of a literary nature. The lads formed themselves into a kind of Corresponding Essay Club. None of this correspondence has been preserved. It was in full stream when Burns was about seventeen or eighteen. "I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far that, though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger." The chief value of this correspondence was the

encouragement it gave him to persevere in the slow and laborious art of English composition, by convincing him that he was a much superior letter-writer to any of his correspondents.

In short, the best thing that his school-life could do for him was to introduce him to English authors of repute, and leave him to learn from them. But it is not by the interrupted study of a silent language that a master's grasp of that language is soon, if at all, to be attained. The best teacher is the living model; and constant exercise of tongue and pen, in his presence, and subject to his correction, is the natural and speediest means to the acquisition of a free and fair use of any language. This is the advantage that most English writers, whom we regard as classical, have had. It was an advantage denied to Burns. If his prose be judged severely on its merits, more than half of it will be found to be undeniably good, and much of it excellent English. But let the deficiencies and disadvantages of his training receive due emphasis, and the qualities of force, freedom, and grace in the prose expression of Burns become indeed phenomenal.

The first book to awaken Burns's mind to a consciousness of style was Mason's "English Collection." The poet tells us, in the longest as it is one of the best pieces of his own prose, how the first bit of English literature to give him pleasure was the "Vision of Mirza." It was Addison, too, and not a native author, that was his first favourite in poetry; and it is significant of the religious atmosphere in which he was bred that the poem which sounded the earliest music in his boyish ears was the hymn beginning "How are thy servants blessed, O Lord!" Addison, then, was the first of the recognised masters of style to influence the composition of Burns. But Addison belonged to a school of which, if he was not the head master, he was at least one of the most distinguished representatives. To the same school, but with variations of style which clearly differentiated them from each other, were Steele, Sterne, Swift, MacKenzie, Pope, Goldsmith and Shenstone, Thomson and Young, all of whom were devotedly studied by Burns, some of them extravagantly admired, and, especially in the

earlier half of his correspondence, rapturously, if somewhat stiffly, imitated. His reading was not by any means confined to these authors, but these were his accepted masters, after whom he moulded his phrases and modelled his periods. He was not alone in regarding them with feelings which, amounting as they did almost to reverence, are a great puzzle to the present age. The universal feeling at the close of last century was that there was but one style of prose in the history of English literature, and that was the style which is associated with the name of Addison. There was no good prose before he wrote, and there could be no good prose in the future that was not shaped in the pattern of his. The English language on its prose side had received its ultimate development; it had no capabilities beyond the point it had reached—fondly believed to be the point of perfection; the forces of nature and art combined could go no further in the composition of artistic English prose. It was the English Augustan age, and as it could never be excelled, the utmost that could be done was to maintain and continue it. Even if he had been an Englishman, with a full native inheritance of the language, it would have been natural for Burns to feel and to be influenced by the prevalent opinion; but, born as he was in a Scottish cottage, a son of the people, and knowing English only at second-hand, and with much of the feeling of a foreigner, it was inevitable that he should be carried away by the general belief that the wits of Queen Anne's reign were the only possible, the imperative models of a classical style of English prose. His desire to imitate them was thus a justifiable one; and the charge of affectation, so often brought against him, falls to the ground. Burns, like his age, consciously followed his models, and made no secret of the imitation. There was no insincerity in his style. He had no other to begin with. As time passed, experience of life and constant exercise in composition purified his style; he became a clever disciple of the Queen Anne School—he was always a respectable one—and was developing a style of his own, specimens of which may stand to his credit alongside the best work of the best English letter-writers,

when he was cut off prematurely in the middle of his thirty-eighth year.

The history of his style divides into three, or perhaps four, pretty well defined periods. The first period ends in the spring of 1786. It was the most eventful, the critical year of his life. Previous to this his prose productions were, at best, clever imitations of his models. The next period extends to near the close of the Clarinda correspondence. It is characterised by great inequalities of style, but gives unmistakeable proof—notably in the biographical letter to Dr. Moore—of having attained to something very like mastery of an expressive, vigorous, and manly style. The Clarinda correspondence gave greater freedom and flexibility to his pen, and, after developing a phase of unusual turgidity of expression, left him in possession of a remarkably clear, pure, and nervous style, of which the following extract will serve as a specimen :—

" When we wish to be economists in happiness, we ought, in the first place, to fix the standard of our own character ; and when, on full examination, we know where we stand and how much ground we occupy, let us contend for it as property ; and those who doubt or seem to deny us what is justly ours, let us either pity their prejudices or despise their judgment. I know you will say this is self-conceit ; but I call it self-knowledge. The one is the over-weaning opinion of a fool who fancies himself to be what he wishes himself to be thought ; the other is the honest justice that a man of sense, who has thoroughly examined the subject, owes to himself. Without this standard, this column in our own mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay, the very weakness and wickedness of our fellow-creatures."

The next period includes his frankest letters—the letters which, upon the whole, show him at his best as a writer. He is now seldom self-conscious, writes with a readier

pen, and in an easier and more worthy style. This period goes down to the time when he first perceived the shadowy premonitions of ruin, and felt the hopelessness of averting it. The last is a short period, in which he wrote little—he had little heart to write—and put much into small compass. The last letter that he wrote—it was the last production of his pen—is typical of the short series which it closes :—

" I returned from sea-bathing quarters to-day. My medical friends would almost persuade me I am better ; but I think, and feel, that my strength is so gone that the disorder will prove fatal to me.—Your son-in-law,

" R.B."

The stern, calm bravery, in view of the last enemy, which breathes in this brief note, is in startling contrast to the semi-hysterical sentences which precede our quotation, and which furnish the occasion of the letter.

The discrepancy of opinion pronounced ostensibly on the style of Burns's letters by judges of acknowledged reputation is one of the marvels of our critical literature. It is, perhaps, to a large extent, traceable to the insufficient discrimination of the substance of the letters from the style. The critics may be separated into four classes—first, those who declare that all his letters were composed as exercises, and for display ; second, those who declare that they are the best ever written, and always sympathetic and sincere ; third, those who declare that all their blemishes are due to his correspondents, and all their beauties to himself ; and last, those who declare that the blemishes are his own, but that they are the exception and not the rule. With the last decision—it is Carlyle's—all kindly readers will, and all candid readers must, agree. It is a remarkable fact that to common people, ignorant of the subtleties of style and unconscious of conventionalism, the letters of Burns are scarcely less interesting than his poetry. It is the matter alone that engages and enchains their attention.

XI.—“PAISLEY BURNS CLUBS.”*

By PROFESSOR J. CLARK MURRAY, MONTREAL.

FROM THE “SCOTTISH AMERICAN JOURNAL.”

THE historians of the future ought to be in a much better position than the historians of former days for giving the interest of local colouring to their pictures of provincial life. An immense amount of literary labour has been undertaken during the present generation in preserving any records that are extant of provincial history all over the civilized world. In this useful work Scotland has certainly not been behind other countries; and among Scotchmen who have devoted themselves to this kind of research there is perhaps no man who has rendered such multifarious service as ex-Provost Brown of Paisley. He has given his townsmen a history of their native place which is not only by far the completest on the subject, but is in many respects a model of what a local history should be. He has also written an elaborate history of the ancient Grammar School of the town, founded by James VI.—a work which contains a mass of curious information in regard to the educational history of Scotland. To Mr. Brown, moreover, Paisley owes some valuable editions of local poets, accompanied with interesting memoirs which have rescued from unmerited neglect a number of humble, but not undeserving, workers in the field of literature. And now in the fairly-won leisure of a long and industrious life he returns once more to his favourite researches by giving his townsmen a history of the clubs which have originated to commemorate the great national poet.

Of course in such a history there must be a great deal that is only of local interest. But I venture to say that there is many a page in it which will be read with eagerness by all who have associations with the locality on account of its pleasing reminiscences of many men whose names have been familiar during the past two or three generations. Incidentally, also, the book, dealing with a poet of worldwide fame, introduces a great deal of matter

that is of interest apart from its local associations. One point with which the reader is at once impressed in glancing through the work is the early period at which Burns's countrymen had recognised that his greatness was such as to justify the formation of local clubs for the purpose of cherishing his memory. The poet died July 21st, 1796, and the records of the first Burns club in Paisley begin with the commemoration of his birthday on the evening of January 29th, 1805,—about eight years and a half after his death. It would be interesting to know if there is any record of an earlier celebration of the poet's birthday elsewhere; and probably the readers of THE SCOTTISH-AMERICAN would receive with pleasure any information on the subject. The celebration at Paisley is peculiarly interesting in view of the fact that the minutes of the meeting, with the exception of the President's address, are in the handwriting of Tannahill, who has engrossed a poem of his own written for the occasion. Tannahill was evidently, therefore, one of the principal originators of this club, but he found a number of extremely willing coadjutors. The president, William McLaren, was an author of some note in his time, for whom Tannahill showed his esteem by dedicating to him the collection of his poems published two years afterwards. Mr. McLaren's address on proposing the toast of the evening—“The Memory of Our Immortal Bard, Robert Burns”—is justly deemed worthy of preservation by Mr. Brown. It had been published at the time in pamphlet form. Among the others present at this early celebration there is one name that deserves a special mention—that of Robert A. Smith. Smith was, by mere accident of birth born in England. His father, who had been a silk weaver in Paisley, returned to the town about the beginning of the century. The son thus formed the acquaintance of Tannahill, and, as is well known, the beautiful

* By Robert Brown, F.S.A., Scot. Alexander Gardner, Paisley and London.

melodies to which the finest of the poet's lyrics are sung, were compositions of his friend. The friendship of the men was a union of kindred spirits, for Smith was a man of great poetical feeling and general culture, though it was in music that his genius found its fullest expression. He must always take a high rank among those who laboured to extend their taste for his favourite art in Scotland during the early part of the century; and as leader of a choir, first in the Abbey Church of Paisley and afterwards in St. George's, Edinburgh, as well as by his beautiful anthems and psalm-tunes, he did more, probably, than

any man of his time to improve the musical service of the Scottish churches.

The few points to which I have drawn attention will suffice to show that Provost Brown's book contains a good many items of literary history that are of more than local interest. To me it has been a source of peculiar gratification, not only because my copy is a gift of the author's courtesy and forms a memento of a fatherly friendship extending back into earliest childhood, but because almost every page has recalled reminiscences delightfully amid all their melancholy of "the days that are no more."

XII.—JOHN KEATS IN AYRSHIRE.

FROM THE "KILMARNOCK STANDARD."

A VOLUME, which has just been issued from the press of Messrs Macmillan — entitled "The Letters of John Keats to his Family and Friends," edited by Mr. Sydney Colvin — will be heartily welcomed by the admirers of the poet. This is the first complete and carefully compiled collection of the letters, and for the first time have we in an accessible form a full copy of the poet's correspondence relating to his tour through the land of Burns. The book is thus a valuable addition to Burnsiana, for the references to the national bard which it contains are of the highest interest and importance.

Comparatively few of our readers, we dare say, are conversant with the particulars of this pilgrimage of John Keats. It was in the summer of 1818 that the poet, then about twenty-three years of age, set out on a walking tour, in company with a young friend, through the Lake District of England, and thence through the shires of Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, and Wigtown ; the journey, after a brief visit to Ireland, being continued, by way of Port Patrick, Stranraer, and Ballantrae, on to the Ayrshire Burns country. The following verses and letters were written at Dumfries :—

"Dumfries, July 1.

"ON VISITING THE TOMB OF BURNS.

"The town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,
The clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all seem,

Though beautiful, Cold—strange—as in a dream,
I dreamed long ago, now new begun.
The short-lived paly Summer is but won
From Winter's ague, for one night's gleam ;
Though sapphire-warm, their stars do never beam :
All is cold Beauty ; pain is never done ;
For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise,
The Real of Beauty, free from that dead hue
Sickly imagination and sick pride
Cast wan upon it ! Burns ! with honour due
I oft have honoured thee. Great shadows hide
Thy face : I sin against thy native skies."

" You will see by this sonnet that I am at Dumfries. We have dined in Scotland. Burns's tomb is in the Churchyard corner, not very much to my taste, though on a scale large enough to show they wanted to honour him. Mrs. Burns lives in this place ; most likely we shall see her to-morrow—This Sonnet I have written in a strange mood half asleep. I know not how it is, the Clouds, the Sky, the Houses, all seem anti - Grecian and anti - Charlemangnish. I will endeavor to get rid of my prejudices and tell you fairly about the Scotch.

" Dumfries, July 2nd.

" In Devonshire they say, ' Well, where be ye going ? ' Here it is, ' How is it wi' yoursel ? ' A man on the Coach said the horses took a Hellish heap o' drivin' ; the same fellow pointed out Burns's Tomb with a deal of life—' There de ye see it, amang the trees —white, wi' a roond tap ? ' The first well-dressed Scotchman we had any conversation

with, to our surprise confessed himself a Deist. The careful manner of delivering his opinions, not before he had received several encouraging hints from us, was very amusing. Yesterday was an immense Horse-fair at Dumfries, so that we met numbers of men and women on the road, the woman nearly all barefoot, with the shoes and clean stockings in hand, ready to put on and look smart in the Towns. There are plenty of wretched cottages whose smoke has no outlet but by the door. We have now begun upon Whisky, called here Whuskey,—very smart stuff it is. Mixed like our liquors, with sugar and water, 'tis called toddy; very pretty drink, and much praised by Burns."

Pursuing the course we have indicated, the travellers reach Girvan on the 10th July. The poet writes:—

"Now we are at Girvan, 13 miles north of Balantrie. Our Walk has been along a more grand shore to-day than yesterday—Ailsa beside us all the way.—From the heights we could see quite at home Cantire and the large Mountains of Arran, one of the Hebrides. We are in comfortable Quarters. The Rain we feared held up bravely and it has been fu' fine this day.—To-morrow we shall be at Ayr."

It was in the inn at Girvan that Keats wrote his magnificent Sonnet

"TO AILSA ROCK. *

"Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid !
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowl's screams !
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams ?
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid ?
How long is't since the mighty power did
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams ?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams ?
Or when grey clouds are thy cold cover-lid ?
Thou answerst not, for thou art dead asleep !
Thy life is but two dead eternities—
The last in air, the former in the deep.
First with the whales, last with the eagle skies—
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made the
sleep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size."

"Kirkoswald, July 11.

"Tis now the 11th of July and we have come 8 miles to Breakfast at Kirkoswald. I hope the next Kirk will be Kirk Alloway. I

have nothing of consequence to say now concerning our journey—so I will speak as far as I can judge on the Irish and Scotch—I know nothing of the higher Classes—yet I have a persuasion that there the Irish are victorious. As to the profanum vulgus I must incline to the Scotch. They never laugh—but they are always comparatively neat and clean. Their constitutions are not so remote and puzzling as the Irish. The Scotchman will never give a decision on any point—he will never commit himself in a sentence which may be referred to as a meridian in his notion of things—so that you do not know him—and yet you may come in nigher neighbourhood to him than to the Irishman who commits himself in so many places that it dazes your head. A Scotchman's motive is more easily discovered than an Irishman's. A Scotchman will go wisely about to deceive you, an Irishman cunningly. An Irishman would bluster out of any discovery to his disadvantage. A Scotchman would retire perhaps without much desire for revenge. An Irishman likes to be thought a gallows fellow. A Scotchman is contented with himself. It seems to me they are both sensible of the Character they hold in England and act accordingly to Englishmen. Thus the Scotchman will become over grave and over decent and the Irishman over impetuous. I like a Scotchman best because he is less of a bore—I like the Irishman best because he ought to be more comfortable.—The Scotchman has made up his Mind with himself in a sort of snail shell wisdom. The Irishman is full of strongheaded instinct. The Scotchman is further in Humanity than the Irishman—there he will stick perhaps when the Irishman will be refined beyond him—for the former thinks he cannot be improved—the latter would grasp it for ever, place but the good plain before him.

"Maybole, July 11.

"Since breakfast we have come only four miles to dinner, not mearly, for we have examined in the way two Ruins, one of them very fine, called Crossraguel Abbey—there is a winding Staircase to the top of a little Watch Tower."

On the same day he writes to another correspondent:—

" Maybole, July 11, 1818.

" MY DEAR REYNOLDS,—I'll not run over the Ground we have passed ; that would be nearly as bad as telling a dream—unless perhaps I do it in the manner of the Laputan printing press—that is I put down Mountains, Rivers, Lakes, dells, glens, Rocks and Clouds, with beautiful, enchanting Gothic, pictur-esque, fine delightful, enchanting, Grand, sublime—a few blisters, etc.—and now you have our journey thus far ; where I begin a letter to you because I am approaching Burns's Cottage very fast. We have made continual inquiries from the time we saw his Tomb at Dumfries—his name of course is known all about—his great reputation among the plodding people is 'that he wrote a good many sensible things.' One of the pleasantest means of annulling self is approaching such a shrine as the Cottage of Burns—we need not think of his misery—that is all gone, bad luck to it—I shall look upon it hereafter with unmixed pleasure, as I do upon my Stratford-on-Avon day with Bailey. I shall fill this sheet for you in the Bardie's country, going no further than this till I get into the town of Ayr which will be a nine-mile walk to Tea.

" Kingswell, July 13.

" We were talking on different and indifferent things, when on turning a corner upon the immediate Country of Ayr—The Sight was as rich as possible. I had no Conception that the native place of Burns was so beautiful—the idea I had was more desolate, his 'rigs of Barley' seemed always to me but a few strips of Green on a cold hill—O prejudice ! it was as rich as Devon—I endeavoured to drink in the Prospect that I might spin it out to you as the Silkworm makes silk from Mulberry leaves—I cannot recollect it—Besides all the Beauty, there were the mountains of Arran Isle, black and huge over the Sea. We came upon everything suddenly—there were in our way the 'bonny Doon,' with the Brig that Tam o' Shanter crossed, Kirk Alloway, Burns's Cottage, and then the Brigs of Ayr. First we stood upon the Bridge across the Doon, surrounded by every Phantasy of green in Tree, Meadow, and Hill,—the stream of the Doon, as a Farmer told us, is covered with trees from head to foot—you

know those beautiful heaths so fresh against the weather of a summer's evening—there was one stretching along behind the trees. I wish I knew always the humour my friends would be in at opening a letter of mine, to suit it to them as nearly as possible. I could always find an egg shell for Melancholy, and as for Merriment a Witty humour will turn anything to Account—My head is sometimes in such a whirl in considering the million likings and antipathies of our Moments—that I can get into no settled strain in my Letters. My Wig ! Burns and sentimentality coming across you and Frank Fladgate in the office—O scenery that thou shouldst be crushed between two Puns—As for them I venture the rascalliest in the Scotch Region—I hope Brown does not put them punctually in his journal—if he does I must sit on the cutty-stool all next winter. We went to Kirk Alloway—a ' Prophet is no Prophet in his own country '—We went to the Cottage and took some Whisky. I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines under the roof—they are so bad I cannot transcribe them—The Man at the cottage was a great bore with his anecdotes—I hate the rascal—his Life consists in fuz, fuzzy, fuzziest—he drinks glasses five for the Quarter and twelve for the hour—he is a mahogany-faced old Jackass who knew Burns—He ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him. He calls himself 'a curious old Bitch'—but he is a flat old dog—I should like to employ Caliph Vathek to kick him. O the flummery of a birthplace ! Cant ! Cant ! Cant ! It is enough to give a spirit the guts-ache—Many a true word, they say, is spoken in jest—this may be because his gab hindered my sublimity ; the flat dog made me write a flat sonnet. My dear Reynolds—I cannot write about scenery and visitings—Fancy is indeed less than a present palpable reality, but it is greater than remembrance—you would lift your eyes from Homer only to see close before you the real Isle of Tenedos—you would rather read Homer afterwards than remember yourself—One song of Burns's is of more worth to you than all I could think for in a whole year in his native country. His Misery is a dead weight upon the nimbleness of one's quill—I tried to forget it—to drink Toddy without any Care—to write a

merry sonnet—it won't do—he talked with Bitches—he drank with Blackguards, he was miserable—We can see horribly clear, in the works of such a Man, his whole life, as if we were God's spies."

Another letter written from Kingswells on the same day is the following :—

" I have been writing to Reynolds—therefore any particulars since Kirkoswald have escaped me—from said Kirk we went to Maybole to dinner—then we set forward to Burness' town Ayr—the approach to it is extremely fine—quite outwent my expectations—richly meadowed, wooded, heathed and rivulated—with a grand Sea view terminated by the black mountains of the isle of Arran. As soon as I saw them so nearly I said to myself ' How is it they did not beckon Burns to some grand attempt at Epic? The bonny Doon is the sweetest river I ever saw—overhung with fine trees as far as we could see—We stood some time on the Brig across it, over which Tam o' Shanter fled—we took a pinch of snuff on the key stone—then we proceeded to the 'auld Kirk Alloway.' As we were looking at it a Farmer pointed the spots where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel' and 'drunken Charlie brake's neck's bane.' Then we proceeded to the Cottage he was born in—there was a board to that effect by the door side—it had the same effect as the same sort of memorial at Stratford-on-Avon. We drank some Toddy to Burns's memory with an old man who knew Burns—damn him and damn his anecdotes—he was a great bore—it was impossible for a Southron to understand above 5 words in a hundred.—There was something good in his description of Burns's melancholy the last time he saw him. I was determined to write a sonnet in the Cottage. I did—but it was so bad I cannot venture it here. Next we walked to Ayr Town, and before we went to Tea saw the new Brig and the auld Brig and Wallace tower. Yesterday we dined with a Traveller. We were talking about Kean. He said he had seen him at Glasgow 'In Othello in the Jew, I mean—er—er—er—the Jew in Shylock.' He got bother'd completely in vague ideas of the Jew in Othello, Shylock in the Jew, Shylock in Othello, Othello in Shylock, the Jew in Othello, etc., etc.—he left himself in a mess

at last. Still satisfied with himself he went to the Window and gave an abortive whistle of some tune or other—it might have been Handel. There is no end to these Mistakes—he'll go and tell people how he has seen 'Malvolio in the Countess,—'Twelfth night in a Midsummer Night's Dream'—'Bottom in Much Ado About Nothing'—'Viola in Barrymore'—'Antony in Cleopatra'—'Falstaff in the Mouse Trap.'

On the evening of the latest date given above Keats reached Glasgow on his way to the Highlands. He took the direct road from Ayr to Glasgow, as is shown by his letters dated from "Kingswells" (the inn in the moor, four miles beyond Fenwick), so that he must have passed through Kilmarnock, and probably would spend a night in this town. On the night of the 11th July he would sleep in Ayr, and on the 13th we find him at "Kingswells." The same evening he arrived at Glasgow. How pleasing it is to think of this glorious young poet walking along our streets, fresh from his homage at the shrine of Burns, 73 years ago!

From the Island of Mull, on the 22nd July, he writes :—

" One of the pleasantest bouts we have had was our walk to Burns's Cottage, over the Doon, and past Kirk Alloway. I had determined to write a Sonnet in the Cottage. I did—but lawk! it was so wretched I destroyed it—however in a few days afterwards I wrote some lines cousin-german to the circumstance, which I will transcribe, or rather cross-scrie in the front of this."

We append both the Cottage Sonnet and the lines written in the Highlands.

SONNET WRITTEN IN BURNS'S COTTAGE.

" This mortal body of a thousand days
 Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,
 Where thou didst dream alone on budded days,
 Happy and thoughtless of thy day or doom!
 My pulse is warm with thine own barley bree,
 My head is light with pledging a great soul,
 My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
 Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal;
 Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
 Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find
 The meadow thou hast trampled o'er and o'er—
 Yet can I think of thee till thought is blind—
 Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name—
 O smile among the shades for this is fame !

LINES WRITTEN IN THE HIGHLANDS
AFTER A VISIT TO BURNS'S COUNTRY.

" There is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain,
Where patriot Battle has been fought, where glory
had the gain ;
There is a pleasure on the heath where Druids old
have been,
Where Mantles gray have rustled by and swept the
nettles green ;
There is a Joy in every spot made known by times of old,
New to the feet, although each tale a hundred times
be told ;
There is a deeper Joy than all, more solemn in the
heart,
More parching to the tongue than all, of more divine
a smart.
When weary steps forget themselves, upon a pleasant
turf,
Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or sea-shore iron scurf,
Toward the Castle, or the Cot, where long ago was
born,
One who was great through mortal days, and died of
fame unshorn.
Light heather-bells may tremble then, but they are
far away ;
Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern,—the sun may
hear his Lay ;
Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows
clear,
But their low voices are not heard, though come on
travels drear ;
Blood-red the sun may set behind black mountain
peaks ;
Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in Caves
and weedy creeks ;
Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the Air ;
Ring-doves may fly convuls'd across to some high
cedar'd lair ;
But the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the ground,
As Palmer's, that, with weariness, 'mid desert shrine
hath found.
At such a time the Soul's a child, in childhood is the
brain ;
Forgotten is the worldly heart—alone it beats in
vain.—
Aye, if a Madman could have leave to pass a healthful
day

To tell his forehead's swoon and faint where first began
decay,
He might make tremble many a one whose spirit had
gone forth
To find a Bard's low cradle-place about the silent
North.
Scanty the hour and few the steps, beyond the bourn
of Care,
Beyond the sweet and bitter world—beyond it un-
aware !
Scanty the hour and few the steps, because a longer
stay
Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal
way :
O horrible ! to lose the sight of well remember'd face,
Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's brow—constant to every
place ;
Filling the Air, as on we move, with Portraiture in-
tense ;
More warm than those heroic tints that pain a Painter's
sense,
When shapes of old come striding by, and visages of
old,
Locks shining black, hair scanty grey, and passions
manifold.
No no, that horror cannot be, for at the cable's length
Man feels the gentle anchor pull and gladdens in its
strength :—
One hour, half-idiot, he stands by mossy waterfall,
But in the very next he reads his soul's Memorial :—
He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance
he may sit down
Upon rough marble diadem—that hill's eternal Crown.
Yet be his Anchor e'er so fast, room is there for prayer
That man may never lose his Mind on Mountains black
and bare ;
That he may never stray league after league some
Great birthplace to find
And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight
unblind."

The lovers of Burns as well as the lovers of Keats, owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Colvin for producing in a form so convenient a collection of letters of such deep and abiding interest.

XIII.—THE AYR BURNS STATUE.

UNVEILING CEREMONY.

FROM THE "GLASGOW WEEKLY HERALD," JULY 11TH, 1891.

ON July 7th, 1891, the reproach of indifference which had so frequently been cast upon the inhabitants of the birthplace of Burns was cleared away through the unveiling of a statue of the poet by Sir Archibald C. Campbell of Blythswood, Grand Master Mason of Scot-

land. In Glasgow, Dundee, Dumfries, Kilmarock, and other places monuments had been erected in recognition of his genius, but in the town which is so much indebted to his associations with it nothing whatever was done, except in recent years, when the natal

day of the poet has been observed with the usual celebrations. About four years ago it occurred to some of the members of the Ayr Burns Club that it was time to wipe away the stigma, and the project being mooted in public it was not long till the matter took a definite shape. Subscriptions for erecting a statue were received from all quarters, in fact from nearly every part of the globe where Scotchmen were to be found. The amount which had been received two years ago warranted the committee in asking twelve Scottish sculptors to submit models. These models were exhibited in the Council Room, and on the recommendation of Mr. Hamo Thorneycroft, R.A., it was decided to select the model submitted by Mr. G. A. Lawson, F.R.S.A., London. The public unanimously endorsed the decision, and the sculptor was instructed to proceed with the work.

It was a difficult matter for the committee to fix on a suitable central site. Various places were suggested, and it was not till after careful consideration that the vacant ground opposite the old Cattle Market was fixed upon. Fortunately, the committee had little trouble in getting the Town Council to agree, seeing that the horse fairs which used to be held there had been removed to the new Cattle Market. The situation is central, being immediately opposite the main entrance to the railway passenger station, so that visitors to the town will have no trouble in finding it. The ground is to be laid off in flower plots, and is to be enclosed with an artistic iron railing, which Sir William Arrol has generously offered to supply.

In connection with the pedestal, the committee were also very fortunate. Sir John M'Dowall, a native of Ayr, but who has been for a long time engaged in business in Greece, while paying a visit to his old friends, generously offered to send from Greece a block of marble for the pedestal; but on learning that the sculptor was afraid that stone would suffer from the climate, he kindly consented to give the equivalent in money. The pedestal, which was designed by Messrs Morris & Hunter, architects, London and Ayr, is a selected rock from Kemnay Quarries, Aberdeenshire. It stands 12ft. 3in. in height, the spread of the base being 12ft. The stone

forming the die weighs about five tons, the amount of granite used in the erection of the pedestal being 25 tons. The lower part of the die has a space on each side for a bronze *bas relief*, and already one for the front panel has been promised. Between the die and the main cornice there is a sculptured granite frieze, worked from models prepared by Mr. David M'Gill, gold medalist, South Kensington, who is a native of Kilmarnock. The architects have taken a new line in regard to the arrangement of the frieze, a ribbon scroll upon it showing the names and dates of the Poet's various residences, beginning at Alloway, 1759, then Mount Oliphant, Lochlea, Kirkoswald, Irvine, Mossiel, Edinburgh, Ellisland, and finally Dumfries.

The statue, which is placed with the face looking towards the poet's birthplace and the "banks and braes o' bonnie Doon," is undoubtedly a credit to Mr. Lawson, and is sure to add to his reputation. To a close observer it will at once be seen that the sculptor's principal object has been to get as near as possible to the real man. He has taken the Poet as a son of the soil, but still a man of independence, the crossed arms and the slightly clenched right hand clearly bearing out that characteristic. The costume is of the simplest kind, and there is no tendency to overdressing.

The following gentlemen formed the Statue Committee:—Mr. William Burns, chairman; Mr. C. Smith, hon. treasurer; Mr. R. Goudie, president, Ayr Burns Club; Provost Ferguson, vice-president, Ayr Burns Club; Mr. J. A. MacCallum, hon. treasurer, Ayr Burns Club; Mr. George Bain, hon. secretary, Ayr Burns club; Mr. J. C. Hight, vice-chairman; Mr. Thomas Duncan, hon. secretary; Messrs James M'Lachlan, W. Murray, J. Hyslop, R. Scoular, Dr. Watt, J. Gray, and J. K. Hunter.

The day was not set apart as a holiday in Ayr, but from an early hour in the forenoon the streets presented a lively appearance, owing to the large number of visitors from all parts of the surrounding country who were landed from trains. The principal streets were gay with flags, and the top of the Wallace Monument, and many of the ships in the harbour were similarly decorated. The earlier part of the day was dull, and rain threatened

to mar the pleasure of the proceedings, but after mid-day the appearance of the sky became more promising, and there were frequent gleams of sunshine. The Provincial Grand Lodge was opened in the Town Hall, and the Grand Master, with the deputation from the Grand Lodge, were received with accustomed ceremony. The procession, under the direction of Brother Lieut.-Col. Morton, left the Low Green soon after two o'clock, and marched through the leading streets, being joined at the Town Hall by the Magistrates of Ayr, Kilmarnock, and other burghs, the Statue Committee, and the council of the Ayr Burns Club, and by the Grand Master. As the deputation arrived at the enclosure, positions were taken up, and Sir Archibald Campbell with due Masonic ceremony, unveiled the statue.

After the company, led by the band of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers from Maryhill, had sung the 100th Psalm, a dedicatory prayer was offered up by Dr. Dykes, Ayr, in the unavoidable absence of the Grand Chaplain. The plumb, level, and square were then applied to the pedestal, and Sir Archd. Campbell, Grand Master, with three knocks on the stone, declared the pedestal correctly erected according to the rules of Masonry. Sir Archibald Campbell then unveiled the statue, amid loud and continued cheering from the large assemblage.

Sir ARCHIBALD, in his address, said—Ladies and gentlemen and brethren all, in 1759 there was born not far, I believe, only two miles, from this town and from this place upon which we now stand, in a cottage built by the father of Robert Burns and by his own hands, the illustrious poet whose statue your patriotism has now enabled me to unveil. It is not gifted to many of us—I might say it is only within centuries a star of his magnitude comes upon the scene; but it is a great thing for a nation to have had sons like Robert Burns—because he knits together ourselves in a bond of union which is unable to be broken. And when we remember now that our nation spreads its borders to an extent

which he himself could never have divined, even in his poetic fancy—when we know that we are scattered as it were throughout the earth raising fresh nations yet his fame in everyone of them is spoken of by your hearty sons and daughters, who go forward to make these great nations, and it unites and knits them to old fatherland at home—these are the uses of these great men, and it has often struck me that the education which the greatest of our poets, men like Shakespeare and Robert Burns, had, was so extraordinarily meagre when we consider the magnificence of the works that they performed, it always strikes me in reading their works that the marvel is where they got all the knowledge. It shows in what power genius can lay hold of the smallest particle and work it up into such a form that it remains a lesson to us in our days. I trust that this great assemblage will not forget the man whose statue I have now unveiled. I trust it may be an incentive to many a young man showing as it does, as I have shown, that it requires perseverance and determination to make oneself of use in this world. I thank you for your kind attention on this occasion.

The band then played “There was a lad was born in Kyle,” in the singing of which the company joined.

Mr. W. BURNS, Chairman of the Statue Committee, having formally handed over the statue to the Magistrates and Council of Ayr, Provost FERGUSON accepted it in the name of that body.

Mr. WALLACE BRUCE, United States Consul at Edinburgh, then recited a poem, “The Auld Brig’s Welcome,” which he had composed for the occasion.

Votes of thanks proposed by Mr. Robert Goudie, President of the Ayr Burns Club, terminated the proceedings, after which the procession was re-formed, and after marching through the town dispersed.

A banquet followed at the Town Hall, Mr. Goudie proposing “The Immortal Memory of Burns.”

XIV.—THE NATIONAL CELEBRATION.

THERE is no more thoroughly national celebration in Scotland, or observed by Scotsmen abroad, than that which thus yearly recalls the matchless genius of Coila's singer. Many have wondered that one who has been called the Ayrshire Bard, whose song was bounded by the horizon of his own walk, who wrote only of his own experiences, and who was prouder of his birthplace on the banks of Doon than of any other spot in Scotland, should be the poet of the Scottish heart, no matter where the heart first beat. Burns never tried to be cosmopolitan, or even presumed to be national. He yearned for poetic recognition it is true, but he estimated his position as lower than that of his poetic predecessors—Ramsay and Fergusson. He craved that he—

—“for puir auld Scotland's sake
Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,
Or sing a sang at least”—

but every Scotsman worthy of the name wants to do something for his native land, no matter how little or how commonplace that something may be. In his later years, after Burns had won a recognized place among the poets of his country, a suggestion was made that he should visit the battlefields of Scotland and sing about them. Such a suggestion was certainly an agreeable one, and he did in reality stand on many of the fields which are famous in Scotland's history for victory or defeat, but he could not write poetry to order, and most of them remained unsung by him. His genius could not be fettered by rule or even by rhyme, it could not be aroused by artificial means, it could not imitate a note, or praise because others praised. His muse was simple, natural and truthful. It was from the heart, and it was only when the heart was stirred that it sang a real song, and the deeper the heart was touched the purer and mellower and nobler became its notes. It is this truthfulness, this earnestness, this heart inspiration that has found a response in the bosom of every Scotsman. Coming from the heart it goes to the heart and rouses an echo which no other national singer has ever awakened, and this has made Burns become, above all others, his

country's poet, the “high chief of Scottish song.”

In the variety of his themes, limited as they mainly were to scenes and persons who came within his own observation, he is comprehensive enough to justify his right to be regarded as the poet not merely of Ayrshire but of Scotland. True, Auld Coila looms up most frequently in his verse because there he had his home before the dark days of Ellisland and Dumfries came upon him; and at Mossgiel, with all its troubles and perplexities, with its bad crops, social extravagancies, theological bickerings, Masonic meetings and love passages, he really spent the happiest days of his short and chequered career. At Mossgiel his muse soared to some of its loftiest heights in such productions as “Man was Made to Mourn,” “The Cotter's Saturday Night,” the “Epistle to Davie,” and that most wonderful picture of low life, “The Jolly Beggars.” At Mossgiel, too, were produced such controversial poems as “Holy Willie's Prayer,” “The Holy Fair,” and “The Ordination,” poems which, however, we may regret the bitterness, the levity, the merciless sarcasm and the contempt for religious ordinances which characterize them, must be credited with having had something to do with lifting the Scottish Church from what the late Principal Tulloch called its “lack of open vision,” and its failure to witness “the living love of a Divine Saviour” during the last century. At Mossgiel, also, Burns was the hero in that love episode which has given a poor Scotch servant-girl—Highland Mary—equal fame, as Alexander Smith has said, “with Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura,” and made her one of the queens in the realm of song.

But with all these outpourings of and about his native country he sang with equal readiness and grace of other sections. The Edinburgh dream did not produce as much as might be expected, but the terrible reality of Dumfries found relief in song, and as the end came nearer it seems to us as if the song became purer and sweeter the closer the hapless poet approached the dark portal which separates time from eternity. The “clear-winding

Devon" received an addition to its beauty when he spoke of it in his verse. Bannockburn was commemorated in one of the war-songs of the world when he sung of in "Scots Wha Hae," "The Birks of Aberfeldy" have invested the Falls of Moness with a charm which is wanting even at Niagara. If a tourist visits Kenmore the lines the poet wrote on its scenic beauties are oftenest heard when the noble scenery of that lovely village is pointed out, as they add a grace which other words could not give. Away further north, where

"Among the heathy hills and rugged woods
The roaring Foyers pours his mossy floods,"

we find the same fact presented to us, that wherever Burns sang of his native land he sang with all the enthusiasm of a Scot, and by his genius showed his countrymen new beauties and hidden graces in the scenes which lay around them.

Burns was essentially a southern poet, and so his muse makes less direct mention of southern men and matters than it does of the north, which was in his time an unknown country to most Scotsmen. But to the minstrels of that southern section of his native land he made many additions. In the song or poem (for it may be described as either) entitled, "Sic a Wife as Willie had," he gives one of those conundrums which are so frequently found in our national song. The poem starts off with—

"Willie Wastle dwelt on Tweed,
The spot they ca'd it Linkumdoddie,"—

but nobody is certain where the spot is or was, although its site has been placed by local investigators in half-a-dozen places. In many of his poems we discover the very spirit which characterises the bulk of the fugitive Border poetry of Scotland, and has made it be regarded as no unworthy part of the nation's literary treasures. Such productions as "Kenmure's On and Awa," "Wanderin' Willie," "Gala Water," or "Auld Rob Morris," are as perfect specimens of pure Border song-writing as can be cited.

Someone has well said that the true country of a Scotsman is his own home, no matter where that home is placed, and if ever a Scotch writer had a right to be called the poet of the Scottish fireside surely that writer

is Robert Burns. His own home life was by no means a perfect one—of that he was himself painfully aware—but whatever his own shortcomings may have been he summed up the philosophy of domestic life truly, truthfully, and completely when he said—

"To make a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life."

Burns even goes further than this, for he shows that this domestic happiness, and indeed happiness of every sort, must have its beginning, whether among gentle and simple, among rich and poor, in the heart.

"It's no in titles nor in rank ;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace or rest ;
It's no in making muckle, mair :
It's no in books, it's no in leär,
To make us truly blest.
If happiness has not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest.
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang,
The heart's aye, the part aye,
That makes us richt or wrang."

It would be hard to find in secular literature an equal amount of common sense, of practical, useful and irrefutable philosophy, than is contained in these few lines. Surely a man who could thus teach his countrymen, and through them the world, is worthy of homage, of reverence, of love.

"A true poet," says Thomas Carlyle, "a man in whose heart resides some effluence of wisdom, some tone of the eternal melodies, is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation. We see in him freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson for us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us. Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns." For a long time it was the custom among many to mingle the praises which greeted the name of our poet with sage reflections on his own waywardness and his own errors, but as the years pass on time is removing these stains, and we are gradually coming to the point where we can see nothing, think of nothing, reason of nothing in con-

nection with his life journey but that he was, as Carlyle had pointed out, the development of whatever is noblest in ourselves." If he sinned he suffered. To us he left his message, and the sum total of that message is, the dignity of manly independence, the brotherhood of man, and love for country and for home. So when we celebrate the day which gave the poet to the world let us think of the seer, of the prophet, and remember with the the purest enthusiasm the man whose words

did more to keep alive the fame of patriotism in Scotland than those of any other writer or teacher since the brave old days of John Knox.

"Forever cherished be his name
To whom the priceless gift was given,
High inspiration's holiest flame—
The light that comes from heaven.
Praise to the bard, the chief of song,
And may, as monumental urns,
All hearts bear on them, deep and strong
The name of Robert Burns."

XV.—THE POET BURNS.

Lines on His Birthday Anniversary at Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, Edinburgh, accompanying the Presentation of a Facsimile of the Declaration of Independence.

By WALLACE BRUCE.

ONCE more within these hallowed walls
We celebrate our Laureate dear,
Whose genius all the world entralls,
Whose love awakens festal cheer.
For here the peasant ploughman stood,
With daisies from the banks of Ayr,
To make this spot a Holyrood—
An altar for each brother's prayer.

But what shall one from o'er the sea,
With honour bring as offering meet ;
What voice or word from them to thee,
Which every heart will gladly greet ;
What theme shall young Columbia bear
To swell the chorus of your song ?
Well, "Here's a hand my trusty frien' ;"
With words that to the tune belong.

Words born of Magna Charta brave,
Along the banks of Runnymede ;
At Bannockburn, when freemen gave
A bonnie cast to freedom's seed ;

Conceived at far-off Marathon,
At Salamis, Thermopylae ;
Crowned in the heart of Washington,
The noblest product of the free.

Words that inspired the grandest strain
Which ever thrilled the onward van,
Soul stirring notes in symbols plain,
Life's lofty creed—"A man's a man ;"
Ay, Robbie Burns, that song of thine
Narrows the seas and girds the world,
And makes these walls a sacred shrine,
Where faith and hope shall be unfurled.

So take the page your children wrote,
A common pride is yours and theirs,
Parents their children fondly quote,
And well-bred bairns their ain forbears ;
Love's cable-tow for evermore
Binds gallant sire and sturdy son,
With hearty grasp from shore to shore,
For Robert Burns and Washington.

XVI.—ROBERT BURNS.

By MRS. A. A. WELLINGTON.

THERE are some lives over which we feel like pausing to repeat Whittier's pathetic lines :
" For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, 'It might have been,'"
and such a life was that of Robert Burns.
Rarely endowed—as few poets before or

since have been—with the gift of spontaneous song, which fairly gurgled from his soul; with the airy freedom of the skylark's lay, qualified by every attribute of his high-strung nature for his God-given mission, yet yielding so weakly, and at times so utterly, to the head-

strong passions that ultimately caused his ruin and brought him to an untimely grave. The tragedy of Burns's life is a familiar story. But few pause to consider how truly great he must have been to so attract the world's notice that, it is estimated, each decade since he died has produced at least two biographies of him.

It has been said—and Shairp begins his biography of the great poet by repeating the statement—that great men, great events, great epochs grow as we recede from them ; and the rate at which they grow in the estimation of men is in some sort a measure of their greatness : "Tried, then," says Shairp, "by this standard, Burns must be great indeed."

It was on January 25th, 1759, in a modest clay-built cottage in the immediate vicinity of the Kirk of Alloway, which Tam o' Shanter has made famous, and near the murmuring Doon, destined to enter into one of the poet's sweetest songs, that Robert Burns was born. A bleak winter storm howled its welcome to the peasant child, blowing down a part of the frail dwelling in which the young mother lay with her first born. Many years later the poet said : "No wonder that one ushered into the world amid such a tempest should be the victim of stormy passions." And, indeed, there was something in his birthday typical of his after life. In "The Cottar's Saturday Night" the great poet has given an immortal pen-picture of his father, who, according to all biographers, was a peasant saint of the old Scottish type. The mother, a bright intelligent woman, much younger than her husband, was the light and joy of her home, and sang at her work the old songs and ballads with which her mind was stored. Thus, though poverty stood like a wolf at the door, there was cheerfulness and affection within the family circle—widened as the years went on by the birth of seven children. When five years old Robert was sent to a school at Alloway Mill, and a little later the father, who held education to be one of the most sacred duties, combined with four neighbours to hire a teacher for their children. According to Shairp, the readings of the household were wide, varied, and unceasing, and it is said some one entering the house at mealtime found the whole family seated, each with a

spoon in one hand and a book in the other. Perhaps there are few countries in the world which could have produced among the poor peasantry just such a character and home as that of William Burness, or Burns, and Scotland may well be proud not only of her famous poet, but of the noble, God-fearing men who tilled her soil.

From his seventh until his eighteenth year, Burns tells us, he worked like a galley slave, and with him the entire family led a life of incessant toil and self-denial, that they might save the roof that sheltered them from the cruel grasp of their exacting landlord. Nevertheless, denser and darker the cloud of poverty settled down around them. The father, worn out by early hardship, was unfit for labour, and upon Robert and Gilbert developed the labour of the farm. In the midst of this hardship—in his sixteenth year—the young poet found time for his first venture both in love and poetry, and the poem, "Handsome Nell," was the result of this boyish passion. From this time—something as with the great German poet Goethe—love and poetry mingle confusingly together in his life. Love-making, his brother tells us, was his chief amusement—or rather his most serious business—for early in his career he found himself betrayed into grave difficulties by his headstrong passions.

In the meantime the family had given up the farm at Oliphant as a bad bargain, and had removed to Lochlea where, for a time, fortune appeared to smile upon them. During these years young Burns seems to have formed his first, and perhaps his last, pure attachment, but, for some reason, his love was not returned. Had it been—had a wife and children claimed his love and care at this turning point—it is safe to say his biographer would have had a different story to tell. As it was, the hot-headed, heavy-hearted young poet left his home at this juncture and went to Irvine, a small seaport town, frequented by smugglers and rough adventurers, and this migration, when his heart was embittered by disappointment, proved disastrous in the extreme. Never again in the conduct of his life did Robert Burns escape from the thraldom of his baser nature. Up to this unfortunate time the religious belief, so faith-

fully inculcated by his pious parents, had proved an anchor, and lawless love had been a thing regarded with horror ; but his brief sojourn at Irvine undermined every principle of his life so completely that he seems to have drifted out helplessly upon the passion-swept sea of life. In the meantime misfortunes thickened around his family ; a flaw in the lease threatened to turn them out into the world homeless and penniless, and Robert returned from Irvine to find his father on his death-bed. Long struggles with scanty means, barren soil, and heartless landlords had proved too much for even the brave, hard-toiling Scotch peasant, and he laid him down for a long rest, leaving the devoted wife and mother to bear her triple burden of sorrow, poverty, and shame alone. Well was it for the good old man that he was spared the crowning misfortune of seeing his gifted son compelled—according to the then universal custom in rural parishes in Scotland—to do penance in church, before the congregation, for the birth of an illegitimate child. The publicity given to his downfall proved anything but beneficial to the young delinquent, and he straightway vented his bitterness of soul in unseemly verses, such as “The Poet’s Welcome to an Illegitimate Child,” “Daddie Auld,” and kindred rhymes. That this seeming glorying in his shame only veiled his real feelings of bitter repentance cannot be doubted, however, by those who have studied his character. “The heart,” says Shairp, “that could respond so feelingly to the sufferings of lower creatures, the unhoused mouse, the shivering cattle, the wounded hare, could not, without sorrowful shame, have brought desolation and ruin into the humblest life.” This unfortunate controversy with the minister and kirk session not only engendered bitterness, but rebellion, in the poet’s bosom, and so encouraged the free-thinking, born of his stay at Irvine, that we find him at once launched into the troubled sea of religious controversy that was raging all around him, and hurling his powerful satire at the pet theories of his opponents. Under this high pressure of feeling he wrote his most satirical poems, such as “The Ordination,” “The Holy Fair,” and “Holy Willie’s Prayer,” in which he so utterly re-

belled against the old Calvinists. In the meantime he had tried his hand at farming, with his brother at Mossgiel, “and those years,” says Shairp, “witnessed three things : the wreck of his hopes as a farmer, the revelation of his genius, and the frailty of his character as a man.” Hitherto he had complained that his life was without an aim, now he determined to take his place among the bards of Scotland ; and the next two years, from 1784 to 1786, witnessed the production of much of his best work, “Halloween,” “To a Mouse,” “The Cottar’s Saturday Night,” “The Auld Farmer’s Address to his Auld Mare,” “The Vision,” “The Mountain Daisy,” and many others, being of this period.

His favourite time for composition was at the plough, and it was while the author was holding this rough instrument of toil that the exquisite poems, “The Mountain Daisy” and “Field Mouse,” were composed. In July, 1786, the little volume containing these immortal poems appeared, causing a perfect transport of delight, not only to the rich and learned, but to the humble peasantry.

And now, what a brilliant destiny opened before the peasant farmer ; how his feet, that had so often traversed their native hills in shoeless nakedness, might have trod the upper air ; what a crown of laurel awaited the head so often exposed to the winter blast, with no covering save its thatch of ebon hair, if he had only lived up to his high calling. But, alas ! even when the little volume containing these immortal poems was in the hands of the publisher the wretched author was in hiding from the just wrath of Jean Armour’s father, and bewailing the loss of his “Highland Mary.” The only course that seemed open to him was to flee from the scene of his last disgrace, and he had engaged a steerage passage in a vessel, bound for the West Indies, when the wonderful success of his first venture set his feet toward the Scottish capital. “His journey,” his biographer tells us, “from Mossgiel to Edinburgh was a sort of triumphal progress.” For him it was reserved to interpret the inmost soul of the Scottish peasant in all its moods, and everywhere the people crowded to greet him and crown him as their poet.

The following March a second edition of

his poems was published, for which there was no less than 1,500 subscribers. About this time he renewed his intimacy with his beloved Jean Armour, which again exposed her to the reproach of her family, and finally resulted in their marriage. With the marriage of his peasant wife, Burns bid farewell to Edinburgh and many brilliant hopes. Some of his admirers have questioned if this sacrifice was really required of him, but Lockhart wisely says: "We cannot but be glad that he chose to act the part of an honest man in thus doing what he could to repair the suffering and shame he had brought upon the mother of his children." From this time, however, the great poet's course tended downward, and the visits of the muse were few and far between. Nevertheless, the wonderful genius was there, and flashed out at intervals with all its wonted brilliancy, sometimes in songs of revelry, as "*Willie Brewed a Peck o' Maut*," or "*The Whistle*;" then, again, breathing a sigh of despondent regret, as in the immortal lyric, "*To Mary in Heaven*," written on the third anniversary of her death. Three years later, at the same season, he again breathed forth his lament for his lost love in that most exquisite poem "*Highland Mary*."

Surely, a man of many moods was the Scottish poet! One day tossing from his pen a song of drunken revelry, the next, a song whose pathos has touched all hearts. In 1789 "*John Anderson, my jo, John*," first appeared, and the following year a burst of inspiration resulted in the matchless "*Tale of Tam o' Shanter*," which the great poet regarded as his masterpiece. After this we have only a few poems worthy of notice, among them being the popular song, "*The Banks o' Doon*," into which he breathed his homesick longings.

And now the French Revolution came on apace, and the words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, echoed and re-echoed through the inmost heart of Burns, finding expression at last in "*Bruce's Address*," which no doubt owes its inspiration as much to his sympathy

with the French Republican as to his Scottish patriotism. A few years later "*Honest Poverty*," with its ringing refrain, "A man's a man for a' that," which so ably embodies the thought underlying the American Declaration of Independence, was given to the world.

Poor Burns!—so rarely gifted—this was among the last of his songs. Sickness and suffering were even then dogging his footsteps, and on July 21st, 1796, the news sounded through all Scotland that Robert Burns was dead. A few days later a great multitude of men, numbering, according to Lockhart, twelve thousand, walked silently down the streets of Dumfries with the remains of him who had sung their simple loves, and joys, and domestic life, with a truth and tenderness never before, and perhaps never since, equalled. Nearly a century has elapsed since the peasant poet was laid in his last resting place, yet to-day the interest in his tomb is world-wide, and up to the present time great men are writing of his life and lamenting his untimely death.

To Scotland, Burns was a benediction. When he appeared, her ancient spirit was all but quenched, and her literary men were above all things ashamed of the Scottish vernacular. Upon this scene he appeared, holding aloft the traditions of Wallace, singing his songs in the native dialect of the people, thus awakening long-forgotten emotions and re-kindling patriotic pride. No wonder the peasantry of Scotland have loved Burns as perhaps no other poet has been loved. He not only sympathized with the wants, the trials, the joys, and sorrows of their obscure lot, but he interpreted these to themselves, and interpreted them to others." Wherever the English language is heard, "*The Banks o' Doon*," "*To Mary in Heaven*," "*Afton Water*," "*Highland Mary*," and others of his exquisite poems are household words. And, it is safe to say, generations yet unborn will linger lovingly over the "*Cottar's Saturday Night*," and "*The Mountain Daisy*."

XVII.—A FRENCH ESTIMATE OF BURNS AND THE SCOTTISH RENAISSANCE.

FROM THE "GLASGOW HERALD," JUNE 6th, 1892.

In these days of Burns-editing and society-making it is an altogether pleasant thing to revert to a translation of Burns's works by a foreigner who has translated the poet as he is, and not in accordance with some nebulous notion of what he should be. Such a book is the "Poésies Complètes de Robert Burns, traduites de l'Ecossais," by Leon de Wailly (Paris, 1843)—the first French translation with any claims to completeness published. The poet little thought that less than half a century after his death "haughty Gaul" would do him homage, and that a Frenchman would write a just and discriminating estimate of his genius and his poetry. Yet this is what M. de Wailly did, and an admirable biographical notice of Burns prefixed to the translation, which gives evidence of a comprehensive knowledge of Scottish poetry surprising in a foreigner, clearly shows that he was in every way fitted for the work. The following is a free translation of M. de Wailly's "Notice sur Burns," the facts of Burns's birth, parentage, etc., being omitted:—"Happy are the unlettered poets; to them the kingdom of heaven is opened. They do not see nature through the spectacles of books, as said, by experience, the spiritual Dryden; they do not consult the arts of poetry; they hear nothing of theories, and are not attached to any literary party. They walk alone in their holy innocence; their feet are not embarrassed by the blankets of the schools; they are not bewildered in the pursuit of glimmering deceptions in the sloughs of imitation; they neither analyse nor describe; they feel, they love, they sing. Science stifles instinct; happy are the unlettered poets; they are able to say with the Spanish proverb:—"I am what I am." The divine qualities of Burns would have been lost had he been more lettered. Look at his compatriot, the didactic Thomson. Nature had not been miserly to Thomson, but he was brought up in Edinburgh, he lived in London, and God and the "Seasons" know that he lost his native stamp in the polish of the cities. If Burns

had known Latin and Greek he would perhaps have acceded to the affectionate remonstrances of his good friend, Dr. Moore, who so earnestly recommended the study of antiquity, and who reproached him with squandering his genius instead of undertaking some poem of length, where he would be able to sow with abundance all the flowers of mythology. The fear of limiting the number of his readers might perhaps have persuaded him to exchange his native idiom for the more common English tongue. But happily he was ignorant, and the erroneous counsels of his friends were lost on him. He would remain faithful to the Scottish tongue; he would not blow the English trumpet in honour of Greek or Roman heroes. He did not know them, and he did not wish to know them. What did he, a Scottish peasant, care for antiquity? But old Scotland, the mother of ale and whisky, with her mythology still living, with all her glorious memories; nature which he has under his eyes, and the feelings that are in his heart; the domestic virtues of the paternal cottage, the sufferings of the animals which are the eternal victims of man, the numerous vexations, and the perhaps more numerous amours—these he would sing. A labourer bending over the soil, or riding along the road, he forgot in his song all the troubles and realities of life. What plant is more frail or delicate than genius, and what a combination of circumstances is necessary for its growth? It was not enough this time to have a passionate heart and an ardent imagination. It was necessary that adversity should flourish and hatch the seed, that ignorance should screen the flower of it. And can we help being astonished that this fruit divine should be so rare, and that, like the marvellous tree in Eastern stories, genius should only flourish once in a hundred years!"

"At the time when Burns was born Scotland was a country peculiarly suitable for this precious culture. Poetry needs a temperate

climate—one between the fierce sun of civilisation and the icy darkness of barbarism. In the first we express what we do not feel ; in the last we do not know how to express what we feel. Thanks to a law passed by the Parliament of Scotland in 1646, and which, though revoked by Charles II., was in force up to 1696, Scotland was precisely in this *mezzo termine*. This law, which ordained the establishment of a school in every parish of the kingdom, produced results at once rapid and satisfactory. The Presbyterian Church, which had used its power over its devotees almost to fanaticism to give the instruction a religious tendency, became owing to its success the natural protector of the school. She paid the schoolmaster, who was very often a young man studying for the ministry, and who thus spent the leisure of a probation, which is very long in that country. All these pious souls regarded it their duty to send their children to the instruction recommended by the parish minister, and since that time not only the most of the farmers, but even the simplest peasants, have suffered the greatest privations in order to give their sons the precarious advantages of a liberal education. If anyone should be inclined to doubt the immense influence of education upon the public morals he has only to compare the statistics of the thirty years from 1767 to 1797, which state that the number of executions in Scotland never exceeded six in the year, with the table made a hundred years before by Fletcher of Saltoun, in which he states that there were then in Scotland not less than a hundred thousand vagabonds, who, disregarding not only the laws of the country, but those of God, lived in promiscuous intercourse, brother and sister, father and daughter, son and mother, and who were frequently punished for robbery and murder. The Scottish Church, finding itself, as we have seen, interested in the spread of education, exercised also a favourable influence upon music, and especially vocal music. Upon the establishment of the Reformed Church in Scotland instrumental music was banished from the churches as being a profane amusement. Instead of being led by an instrument, the voices of the congregation were conducted by what is

called a precentor (*grand chantre*), and it was the custom for everyone present to assist in the singing of the psalm. Church music, therefore, became part of the education of the peasantry. It was usual during the long winter evenings for them to receive their singing lessons from the parish schoolmaster, who was often himself precentor, or from some strolling professor whose beauty of voice caused his services to be in demand. Frequently the singing was followed by dancing. For a ball-room, some house whose flooring was the earth ; the lights were candles fixed on a stick driven into the wall ; and the master of ceremonies one of themselves. But the zeal of the dancers made up for the lack of ceremony, and with joyous spirit they went through a succession of reels, strathspeys, and hornpipes, and all the dances of the country. The taste for dancing is very pronounced among Scotsmen of all ranks, but especially among the peasantry. After the labour of the day lads and girls would walk several miles in the cold and terrible nights of winter in order to attend these schools ; and the moment the violin strikes up a national air fatigue is forgotten, all straighten themselves up from the bending toil, every eye sparkles with pleasure, and it is this which proves, not the more grace but their greater agility, and their *verve* and correctness of ear. Education thus diffused promoted the growth of poetry in the country ; and without this law born of a revolution, and which required another revolution to strengthen it, it is possible that the poetic crown of Scotland would not have been enriched by three such beautiful flowers of the field as Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns. Allan Ramsay, who has been called the Theocritus of Scotland, was the son of a workman in the lead mines at Hopetoun; Leadhills. He was born on that high range of hills which separate Clydesdale and Annandale, in a hamlet on the banks of the Glengonar, a small stream which falls into the Clyde. The ruins of this village are still pointed out to tourists. At the beginning of last century he went to Edinburgh, where he apprenticed himself to a barber, being then fourteen or fifteen years old. Being imbued with a

taste for poetry, and having composed some verses in the Scottish dialect, he changed his profession for that of a bookseller, and became acquainted with the literary and fashionable world. In 1721 he published a volume of poems which was favourably received, and afterwards a collection of national melodies under the title of "Evergreen," and its success may be estimated by the number of imitations it produced. It became fashionable in Edinburgh for lovers to compose verses to the favourite airs of their mistresses, like languishing shepherds. In the year 1731, Robert Crawford of Auchinames wrote "Tweedside," which excited general enthusiasm. In 1743, Sir Gilbert Elliot, the first Scottish lawyer who knew how to speak and write elegant English, having had the displeasure of seeing Miss Forbes, his sweetheart, wedded to another, breathed his plaint in the delightful romance, 'My sheep I neglected, I lost my sheephook ;' and twelve years later the sister of the same Sir Gilbert wrote the words expressive of the national dolor, adapted to the air of 'The Flowers o' the Forest,' a beautiful little composition whose sprightliness detracts nothing from its simplicity. Add to these the ballad of 'Hardiknute,' by Lady Wardlaw; 'the Birks of Invermay,' by Mallet; the youthful work of Thomson beginning, 'For ever, fortune, wilt thou prove ;' the pathetic ballad, 'The Braes of Yarrow,' by Hamilton of Bangor, and you have the principal compositions which signalise the renaissance of the rustic poetry of Scotland, of which Allan Ramsay has perhaps the best title to be called the inaugurator. I say renaissance, because its origin was more ancient and more illustrious. It had a king for its father. *Christis-Kirk of the Grene*, the first example of this species, is attributed to James I., the unfortunate son of Robert III., who, by the perfidy of his uncle, the Duke of Albany, fell at the age of 11 years into the power of Henry VI., with whom he remained a prisoner for 20 years. This young prince, whom the King of England, though his jailer, saw fit to educate with the best possible care, became an accomplished gentleman. In dancing, riding, archery, and the tournament; grammar, philosophy, rhe-

toric, music, and poetry, he showed a remarkable aptitude. He was captive for 15 years at Windsor Castle, where he fell deeply in love with Lady Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Duke of Somerset, whom he married in 1424. His love inspired him to write a poem of 97 stanzas, under the title of 'The King's Quair,' in which he sang, with a voice pure, melodious, and often impassioned, the praises of his beautiful mistress—

Ah, sweet, are ye a worldly creature,
Or heavenly thing in likeness of nature?

Chère belle, êtes-vous humaine créature,
Ou bien chose du ciel sous forme de nature?

As for this poem of *Christis-Kirk of the Grene*, another Royal author disputes its authorship; and Sir David Dalrymple, contrary to the opinion of Tytler, believes that James V. was its real author. Whoever it was, is it not a glorious thing for the rustic muse of Scotland to see two monarchs disputing for its humble crown of blue-bells and gowans? Allan Ramsay essayed to complete the poem of King James by adding to it two cantos of his own composition, and it is for this reason that *Christis-Kirk of the Grene* is generally printed in the works of Ramsay." After describing this poem, and referring to the other works of Ramsay, M. de Wailly goes on to deal with Fergusson. "Evidently," he says, "Fergusson's chief poem, 'The Farmer's Ingle,' inspired Burns's most serious composition, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' Burns, when he began to write, had read Allan Ramsay, but he had not read the poems of Fergusson. When he did read them, however, he felt an affection for that ardent and sensible soul, that young imagination, which inspired him many a time afterwards. Having ascertained that Fergusson's tomb had not obtained the honour of a stone, he wrote to the magistrates of the Canongate in Edinburgh, and, not without pain, drew from their *insouciance* permission to repair at his own cost this forgotten shame. Alas! same country, same genius, same heart, same fortune, who was better able to appreciate Robert Fergusson than Robert Burns! Both their lives were embittered by privations of all kinds, and by the moral sufferings of unrecognised genius. Fergusson, less to be pitied perhaps, died at the age of

20, without wife, without children, having only to weep for himself and suffer his own hunger.

"I dread thee, fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!"

"Je te redoute, ô sort implacable et sévère,
De ma peur de poète, et d'époux, et de père!"

"Rustic eclogues, familiar epistles, amorous tales, national songs, country stories—Robert Burns dealt with all the kinds of poetry familiar to Allan Ramsay. Like him, he is distinguished by the reality of his characters and the truth of his scenery; by the native freedom of his style, and by his humour; but Burns is far ahead of his predecessor in liveliness of spirit and warmth of soul. Burns is of that family of writers whose power reaches the heart: *Pectus est quod facit disertos.* With him there is no literary preoccupation, none of the beauties of the room; he lives in the pure air amid nature. He is not one of those pastoral muses who only visit the country on fine days to recoup themselves after all their luxuriant winter dissipations; courtly muses who only sing of nature in her pleasant garb, whose forests like those of Virgil, are dignified as a consul; who transfer their amours from the city to bring them back to the shams of a gravelled walk and an artificial river. The muse of Burns is entirely rustic; she dwells in a cottage; rises with the sun; harnesses herself with the cattle; soaks the furrows with her sweat; lives on oatmeal; willingly frequenting the village hostel; speaking more of poppies than of lilies; of pools than of lakes; of wild ducks than of swans; and only taking her loves in the village—perhaps it is for this reason that she is so constant. With such a guide we are far away from the boudoirs of the warm greenhouses, as we inspire the noble air, as we are animated, interested, impassioned in speaking to the heart, as we are conscious of the intimate harmony with those we love, and in whom we live." So much for M. de Wailly's estimate of Burns and the Scottish renaissance.

In translating the writings of a poet like Burns, the usual difficulties attending the conveyance of a poet's works into another language are doubly intensified. Our French translator was perfectly well aware of this, and plainly admits at the conclusion of his preface

that in his own language there can be found nothing equivalent to the naïve charm of the Scottish dialect. "But," he says, "if the translation is not satisfactory, I will engage, without the least hypocrisy, to say that it is not the fault of the poet, but is owing to the shortcomings of the translator and of the translation." Hence, although M. de Wailly did his work as well perhaps as it could possibly be done, a Scotchman reading these French verses must be struck by their painful inadequacy to convey to our friends across the Channel the faintest idea of the magic power which Burns exerts on the hearts of his countrymen. For example take the following:—

"Appelle les brebis sur les hauteurs,
Appelle-les où croît la bruyère,
Appelle-les où roule le ruisseau,
Ma belle chérie."

All the facts are there, and all the ideas are faithfully reproduced in French from Burns done into English: but it is not "Ca' the yowes to the knowes" that we read, but "Call the sheep to the heights." The translator had apparently some difficulty in deciding whether he should adopt a metrical and rhymed translation or a prose one; but he wisely adopted the latter mode. He, however, gives us two specimens of his efforts in rhyme in "Tam o' Shanter" and "John Barleycorn." The first verse of "John Barleycorn"—(Jean Grain-d'Orge)—as done in each style will at once show the superiority of the prose translation:—

- (1) " Il était une fois trois rois
A l'orient, puissants tous trois :
Ils avaient juré par la gorge
Qu'ils feraient mourir Jean Grain-d'Orge."
- (2) " Il y avait trois rois à l'Est,
Trois grands et puissants rois,
Et ils firent le serment solennel
Que Jean Grain-d'Orge mourrait."

A decidedly happy effort, however, which has a real dash of the spirit of the original in it, is "The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer to the Scottish representatives," which opens as follows:—

" Vous lords irlandais, vous chevaliers et squires,
Qui représentez nos bourgs et comtés,
Et faites sagement nos affaires
Au parlement,
A vous les prières d'un simple poète
S'adressent humblement."

Still better is the first verse of the "Address to the Deil" (*Requête au Diable*), which is full of characteristically Scottish words :—

" O toi, quel que soit le titre que te convienne,
Vieux cornu, Satan, Nick, ou pied fourchu,
Qui là-bas dans ta caverne sombre et enfumée,
Enfermé sous les écouteilles,
Fais jaillir autour de toi l'écuelle de soufre
Pour échauder les pauvres malheureux ! "

The reader will observe how "Cootie," a term derived from *clood*, a hoof, is translated *pied fourchu*, cloven-foot; and "spairges," an untranslatable word, is given as *fais jaillir*, to gush or burst forth, which is perhaps as near the idea as French can get; "brimstone cootie," which is calculated to puzzle any translator, is rendered by *écuelle de soufre*, a bowl of brimstone. Naturally, however, the lover of Burns will want to know the fate of the immortal Tam o' Shanter, and it is satisfactory to find that in the prose version full justice has been done to our old friend and "le cordennier Johnny, sun ancien, fidèle, altéré ami." When Tam is in his direst extremity he is thus apostrophised :—

" Ah, Tam ! ah, Tam ! tu vas avoir tou cadeau de foire
Elles te rôtiront en enfer comme un hareng ! "

M. de Wailly being unable to promise Tam his "fairin'," has to put up with "present of the fair," which is not so compact. So also in "John Anderson" he is unable to get over "jo," so we have it :—

" John Anderson, mon bon ami, John."

In a great number of instances the translation has a very funny appearance to a Scot, as when "Whistle ower the lave o't" comes up as "Sifflez sur le reste," and "Landlady count the lawin'" as "Cà donc, hôtesse, additionne le compte." The description of the wooing of the philosophical Duncan Gray is very good, the verse in which the rejected suitor is represented as consoling himself runs :—

" Le temps et la chance ne sont qu'une marée,
Ah ! ah ! quelle cour !
L'amour dédaigné est dur à supporter,
Ah ! ah ! quelle cour !
Irai-je, comme un sot, dit-il,
Mourir pour une pécore hautaine ?
Elle peut aller en France pour moi !
Ah ! ah ! quelle cour ! "

The lines on the peregrinations of Captain Grose lose none of their droll humour when done into French, and for the satisfaction of *frères écossais*, the opening lines may be quoted :—

" Ecoutez, terre de gâteaux, et frères écossais,
De Maidenkirk chez Johnny Groat,
S'il y a un trou a un de vos habits,
Je vous avertis d'y prendre garde :
Vous avez au milieu de vous un gaillard qui
prend des notes,
Et, ma foi, il l'imprimera ! "

" Auld Lang Syne " seems to have given the translator some trouble, although he has managed to make a fairly passable translation of a most difficult composition :—

" LE BON VIEUX TEMPS.

" Est-ce que notre ancienne liaison s'oublierait,
Et ne nous reviendrait plus à l'esprit ?
Est-ce que notre ancienne liaison s'oublierait,
Et aussi les jours du bon vieux temps ?

Chœur—Pour le bon vieux temps, mon cher,
Pour le bon vieux temps
Nous boirons encore un coup de bonne amitié,
Pour le bon vieux temps.

" Nous avons tous deux couru sur les coteaux
Et cueilli les belles marguerites ;
Mais nous avons plus d'une fois trainé nos pieds
fatigués,
Depuis le bon vieux temps.

Chœur.

" Nous avons tous deux patangé dans le ruisseau,
Dupuis le lever du soleil jusqu' au dîner ;
Mais les vastes mers ont rugi entre nous,
Dupuis le bon vieux temps.

" Et voici ma main, mon fidèle ami,
Et donne-moi la tienne,
Et nous boirons un coup de tout cœur
Pour le bon vieux temps.

" Et à coup sûr vous tiendrez votre pinte,
Et à coup sûr je tiendrai la mienne,
Et nous boirons un coup de bonne amitié
Pour le bon vieux temps."

The last verse is very good, the translator having caught the idea completely. It need hardly be pointed out that "les belles marguerite" is literally "the gowans fine," the French name for the gowan or daisy being "marguerite."

Passing from the lively to the pathetic, we find the "wee sleekit, cowerin', timorous beastie" thus addressed :—

" Petite bête lissoe, farouches et craintive,
Oh, quelle panique dans ton sein !

Tu n'as pas besoin de te sauver si vite
 Et d'un pas si précipité !
 Il me repugnerait de courir après toi
 Avec le curoir meurtrier ! ”

No less commendable is the translation of “Tam Samson's Elegy,” which commences—

“ La vieille Kilmarnock a-t-elle vu le diable ?
 Ou le grand MacKinlay s'est-il foulé le talon ?
 Ou Robinson est-il rétabli et en état
 De prêcher et de lire ?
 ‘ Non, pis que toutcela ! ’ s'écrie chaque jeune garçon,
 ‘ Tam Samson est mort ! ’ ”

These specimens show that the poetry which is breathed in Burns's lines can hardly be killed even after going through the ordeal of two translations—from Scots into English, and from English into French—which fact is a strong proof, if such were needed, of the sterling quality of the poet's work. This is specially noticeable in the last piece to be cited—“Scots, wha hae,” or, as it is entitled in the volume before us, “Bannockburn.” It is impossible to destroy the inherent nobility of this heroic war-song even with two translations and a faulty original to begin with :—

“ BANNOCKBURN.

“ Ecossais, qui avez saigné sous Wallace,
 Ecossais, que Bruce a souvent conduits,
 Soyez les bienvenus à votre lit sanglant
 Ou à la victoire glorieuse !

“ Voici le jour et voici l'heure,
 Voyez le front de la bataille se rembrunir ;
 Voyez approcher les forces de l'orgueilleux Edouard—
 Edouard ! les chaînes et l'esclavage !

“ Qui sera un infâme traître !
 Qui peut remplir sa tombe d'un lâche
 Qui assez bas pour être esclave ?
 Traître ! lâche ! tourne et fuis !

“ Que pour le roi et la loi de l'Ecosse
 Vout tirer avec vigueur l'épée de la liberté,
 Vivre homme libre, ou périr homme libre ?
 Calédonien, alions avec moi !

“ Par les maux et les peines de l'oppression !
 Par vos fils aux chaînes de l'esclave !
 Nous tarirons nos plus précieuses veines,
 Mais ils seront—ils seront libres !

“ Jetons a bas ces fiers usurpateurs !
 Un tyran tombe dans chaque ennemi !
 La liberté est dans chaque coup !
 En avant ! vaincre ou mourir ! ”

XVIII.—ROBERT BURNS AND THE EXCISE.

By R. W. MACFADZEAN.

THE facts of Burns's Excise career are simple enough. In December, 1787, he wrote to the Earl of Glencairn, “I wish to get into the Excise.” Early in 1788 “kind old Sandy Wood,” the surgeon who treated his crushed limb, interested himself with Graham of Fintray to get him the appointment, with the result that his name was at once put on the list. In April he was the bearer of the Board's order for his instruction for six weeks in his future duties to Mr. James Findlay, officer, Tarbolton. (This document is quaint reading to Revenue Officers now-a-days.) In the end of May, 1788, Burns, having finished his instructions, went to Ellisland with his commission in his pocket. He did not, however, get employed till the following year, and was promoted to a division on 28th July, 1790. All available evidence

proves that Burns earnestly desired the appointment. His farming had failed, his cultivation of the Muses had not met with the reward it merited, and the Excise appointment probably saved him and his from great privation.

Every proof exists that he became an energetic and faithful officer, and that he bore his commission with fidelity to the last. Only one passing cloud darkened his official escutcheon, and far too much was made of it by his biographers, Lockhart and Cunningham.

Before the French Revolutionary movement degenerated into the Reign of Terror, it awakened the sympathy of all earnest Liberals in this country, and few people will now affirm that his participation in this feeling did not do the poet credit.

In the spring of 1792 he committed the indiscretion of sending four rusty old carronades, which he had captured with the smuggling brig in the Solway, to the French Government. This practical joke had serious consequences. They were stopped at Dover, and an inquiry was ordered to be made into "Mr. Burns's" political opinions. The result was a verbal caution. His loyalty was never really doubted, and until the date of his fatal illness he was a zealous Volunteer in the Dumfries corps.

Sufficient publicity has, perhaps, not been given to the fact that about 35 years ago great additional light was thrown upon Burns's official career. Mr. James Macfadzean, now superannuated Collector of Glasgow, was at that time engaged at Somerset House in the removal of old stores to the new wing, when he discovered among the books of the Scotch Board several in which the name of the poet Robert Burns appeared.

There were five pages in different books which contained his name—and these were—First, a scheme of the Dumfries District, in which the poet's name occurs in three separate stations; second, a list of persons recommended for promotion to the rank of supervisor, with dates of appointment, etc., containing the poet's name; third, a similar list of later date, where there appears opposite the poet's name the impressive entry—"Dead." (It is interesting to notice here that the next man on the list—James Lindsay—was appointed supervisor of Dunblane District on the 10th August, 1797, proving that if the poet had lived in all probability he would have received the appointment.) Burns's name remained on the list till his

death, and he was aware of the fact. In 1795 he wrote to Patrick Heron :—"I am on the supervisors' list, and as we come on there by precedence, in two or three years I shall be at the head of the list, and appointed of course." Fourth, a page, Letter B., from an alphabetical register in which the official characters of the officers were recorded at the head office. The poet's character is here given, "Never tryed—a poet," with the subsequent interlineation—"turns out well." Fifth, a page, Letter B., from a similar register compiled three years later. Burns's character given here is, "The poet—does pretty well." From an inspection of the characters given on the register it is evident that they were drawn out with great candour, and that of Burns, it is pleasing to observe, is about the average.

Probably the most important book found was a "Register of Censures," embracing the whole period of the poet's service. It appeared to be a faithful record of everything of this kind issued by the Board, from cautions for trifling irregularities to dismissals. This volume was carefully searched by Mr. Macfadzean, and, as all lovers of Burns will be glad to know, the poet's name was conspicuous by its absence.

From inquiries recently instituted in Somerset House by Sir Robert Micks it has transpired that these interesting registers are no longer in existence. It was always understood that they were carefully preserved at the head office, and it is deeply to be regretted that there was no one there sufficiently alive to their importance to save them from destruction.

XIX.—SALE OF TAM O'SHANTER INN, AT AYR.

THE Tam o'Shanter Inn, situated in High Street, Ayr, and known all over the world as the rendezvous of Tam o'Shanter and Souter Johnny, his ancient trusty, drouthy crony, was exposed for sale by public roup in the King's Arms Hotel, on November 2, 1892. The property belonged to the Weavers' Incorporation, but on that body becoming extinct it fell to the Crown. Application was made by

the Town Council to the Crown asking it as a gift. This application, however, was refused, and the Crown authorities determined to sell it. There was a large attendance, and bidding was brisk, the upset price—£2500—being surpassed to the extent of £610. The property fell to the bid of Councillor Fraser, Ayr, at £3190.

In connection with this sale the *Glasgow*

Herald said :—“ Did not the good teetotal folk of Ayr miss a great chance in connection with the sale of Tam o’Shanter Inn ? This inn is situated in the High Street, and is well known to those who visit the famous town for the purpose of seeing and making themselves acquainted with everything connected with the name and fame of Burns, whether real or mythical. It has been supposed that this inn was the howff in which the two cronies, Douglas Graham and John Davidson, whom the poet took as models for Tam o’Shanter and Souter Johnny, were in the habit of meeting on market days and ‘ bousing at the nappy.’ Burns is also believed to have had many a delectable sederunt in the same place. Whether these things are true or the reverse, they form the basis of a tradition suitable enough for an inn, where the special attractions are a chair in which Burns used to sit, and a quaich from which he used to drink.

“ Pious visitors to the house have the privilege of sitting in the hallowed chair for nothing, and drinking from the sacred cup on paying for the tipple, which is generally whisky. Many a fool has sat in the chair and been none the wiser ; and many a wise

man has drained the cup until he became a fool—all to the glory of Burns, who probably never saw either chair or quaich. On the Weavers’ Incorporation, to which the property belonged, becoming extinct, it fell to the Crown, who, declining to give it as a gift to the Town Council, determined to sell it to the highest bidder. This is so like the Crown, which has no respect for Scottish rights or sympathy with Scottish wrongs. But what was the chance missed by the Ayr teetotallers ? Why, the chance of purchasing the Tam o’Shanter Inn, and converting it into a temperance hotel, where the chair could be let at so much a ‘ sit,’ and the quaich sent round at so much a ‘ sip,’ the tipple being, of course, of the temperance order. Perhaps Councillor Fraser, who obtained the property for £3190, after a keen competition, is a teetotaller in disguise, and will horrify the Burns maniacs by transforming the show into a nine-days’ wonderment. He could, if he saw fit, use the cup for holding teetotal pledges, and split up the chair to make lucifer matches for lighting the tobacco of pipes all denominations.”

XX.—SOME BURNS RELICS.

BY JOHN MUIR.

DURING the past year or two I have collected a few relics and notes relating to the Poet which I think ought to be preserved in BURNSIANA.

A BURNS TUMBLER.—Mrs. Hutchinson, daughter of Colonel James Glencairn Burns, the third son of Robert Burns, presented Mr. John Muir with a tumbler originally the property of our National Poet. The relic is enclosed in a handsome oak case, lined with green velvet, and secured by a lock. On one side of the tumbler is engraved an enlarged copy of the Poet’s Seal, or Burns’s Arms, as it is styled by the family ; and on the other side the following inscription cut out on the glass :—“ This Glass, once the property of Robert Burns, was presented by the Poet’s Widow to James Robinson, Esq., and given by his Widow to her son-in-law, Major James

Glencairn Burns. 1840.” The following letter, in the holograph of the donor, gives the history of the relic :—

3 BERKELEY STREET,
CHELTENHAM, JULY 6th, 1892.

MY DEAR MR. MUIR,— I purpose sending you by the parcels post to-night, enclosed in a box, a tumbler that belonged to my grandfather, the Poet, and hope you will accept it from me.

I believe he had four of them, but one has been broken. The one I now send you was given by my grandmother, Jean Armour, to Mr. James Robinson, of Sunderland. He was father of my mother, who died when I was born.

When my father returned from India, his mother-in-law, Mrs. Robinson, gave this tumbler to my father, and he had the inscrip-

tion and his father's coat of arms engraved on the glass. . . . Now for the history of the box :—It was made from one of the piles of old London Bridge. The light pieces of oak are from the 'Royal George.' My father had them given him by friends. . . .—Yours sincerely,

S. HUTCHINSON."

AULD LANG SYNE IN HAWAIIAN.—In presenting the readers with a specimen of this curiosity I cannot do better than quote the words of the translator, Mr. W. F. Wilson, who sent it to me. Mr. Wilson says:—"This is the only attempt, so far as I am aware, to give in Hawaiian any of Burns's songs. I may further mention that it is next to impossible to translate into Hawaiian and make the verses either rhyme or to have the same number of feet in each line."

" A nolaila no ka manawa i hala, kuu hoalauna,
No ka manawa loihi i hala,
A e lawe kaua i ke kiaha o ke aloha
No ka manawa loihi i hala."

The translation was first published in the *Paradise of the Pacific*, December, 1891.

UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF BURNS.—"Dear Sir,—Any more letters for me that may come to your care, send them to Dumfries, directed to be detained till called for.—I mean this direction only for a week; afterwards direct to me at Mossiel, near Mauchline:—To-day I set out for a ride thro' Northumberlandshire. I beg you or Mr. Creech will acquaint me whenever he returns.—I am, Dear sir, yours,

ROBERT BURNS.

Berrywell, 24th May, 1787.

P.S.—I rec'd a bill from Mr. Pattison, which he has wrote to you about.—My letter granting receipt had miscarried, but I have wrote him again to-day.—R.B.

Mr. Hill, at Mr. Creech's shop, Edinburgh.—Bears postmark thus: DUNSE."

The Caledonian Society of Christchurch, Canterbury, N.Z. paid £10 for above letter in May, 1884.

UNPUBLISHED NOTE OF BURNS.—The following interesting note in the handwriting of

Burns is in the collection of George Esdaile, Esq., Platt-in-Rushholm. On a piece of paper $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 4 in., is written the following memo:—

"Please send me by the Bearer, my servt., a bar of shoeing iron, which place to acct. of [2/9.]—Gentlemen, your very humble servt.,
ROBERT BURNS.

Ellisland, October 8th, 1790.

To Messrs Cr...bies & Co.,
Merchts., Dumfries."

Messrs Crosbies marked the price of the bar as 2s. 9d., and put the order on the file where it must have remained many years, as the rust has acted on the paper and eroded the "os" in their name.

UNPUBLISHED NOTE.—The following Exercise Notice, in the holograph of the poet, served upon Robt. Moore, Esq., was presented to the Dumfries and Maxwelltown Observatory by Wm. Johnston, Esq. of Cowhill:—

" Robert Moore in Dumfries I hereby intimate to you that by decree of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Dumfries you are fined in the sum of 1 £ Ster. for making bricks without entry—and if the said sum be not paid within 14 days from this date you will incur an additional expence of 2d on each 1 Sh. Ster.

ROBERT BURNS.

26 Oct. 1789."

A BURNS RELIC.—Mr. Wright, of the Strathbroke Hotel, Broxburn, has purchased for a handsome sum the window of a house in Kirkliston, originally an inn at which Burns passed a night in one of his journeys from Edinburgh. On one of the panes the poet scratched the lines :

" The ants about a clod employ their cares
And think the business of the world is theirs.
Lo ! waken combs, seem palaces to bees,
And mites conceive the world to be a cheese."

The window is being suitably encased, and will be placed in a prominent position in the hotel.

The Rev. Robert Aris Willmott is a name well known to collectors as the editor of various editions of Burns's poems. Three of

his editions are recorded in the catalogue, and preserved in the collection, bearing the name of the late Mr. James M'Kie, Kilmarnock—one under 1865 and two under 1866. In Mr. Gibson's Bibliography there is a Wilmott edition under 1858, and also the two under 1866 as in the M'Kie Library; but Mr. M'Kie does not record the 1858 edition, nor Mr. Gibson the one dated 1865. The 1858 and 1866 editions are in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow. The British Museum has two of the foregoing editions—1865 and one of the 1866 issues—and, in edition, and by the same editor, one under 1856 (presumably the first of the series), and another without date, but noted within brackets as 1880. These last two are not to be found in the M'Kie or Mitchell Library collections; and, except by Mr. John P. Anderson, are not recorded in any of the Bibliographies. Quite recently I bought from a London bookseller a copy of the 1856 edition. As it is probably the initial volume of the series—at least it is the first known to collectors—perhaps it may interest your readers if I transcribe the imprint:—"The Poetical Works of Robert Burns. Edited by the Rev. Robert Aris Wilmot, Incumbent of Bear Wood. Illustrated by John Gilbert. [Foolscap octavo]. London : George Routledge & Co., 1856."

A FORGED LETTER.—To Mr. John Hill, Weaver, Cumnock :

Mauchline, June 11th.

MY DEAR SIR,—It is indeed impossible for me to speak upon such a subject as the loss you have suffered. Allow me, however, to send you this expression of my sympathy and sorrow at the loss of a friend. It is another part of ourselves gone when we lose a friend. God keep those we have left, as very few are worth the praying for, and ourselves probably least of all. I was much pleased at your expression in your intimation to me, as I am now aware that you understood my meaning and character, and that although our last meeting was noisy, I hope you took no umbrage at anything spoken by Mr. Nicol, whose character is somewhat noisy in its expression. Believe me, I did not intend to go beyond anything that was

unfriendly, and your communication has shown me that. I am waiting to see you.—Believe me to be, yours most affectionately,

ROBT. BURNS.

Mr. ROBERT BURNS-BEGG writes in a contemporary :—"The experiences of Burns and his wife at Ellisland were all that heart could desire. He was leading a quiet domesticated yet active life, and alike in body and mind was experiencing the full benefit of it, while his wife in the loving companionship of her husband, and in the sweet cares of her family and household, found all that her womanly nature required to fill to overflowing her cup of happiness. In a hitherto unpublished poem by Burns, we have the following eloquent expression of the contentment, love, and happiness which formed the 'home atmosphere' of the poet and his wife."

" To gild her worth I asked no wealthy dower,
My toil could feed her, and my arm defend ;
I envied no man's riches ; no man's power,
I asked of none to give, of none to lend.

And she the faithful partner of my care,
When ruddy evening streaked the western sky ;
Looked towards the uplands if her mate was there,
Or through the beeches cast an anxious eye."

DISCOVERY OF BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.—A Burns find was recently made by a private collector at a book sale. It is a manuscript volume from the collection of Riddell of Glenriddell, the poet's friend and neighbour when he was in Ellisland, and contains three holograph poems by Burns. Two of these have not been published. One is a satire on the then Duke of Queensberry, who is taunted with the desertion of the King for the Prince of Wales's party. The other is a "bucolic" concerning "Grizzel Grimm, the witch of Cluden," said to have been suggested by a tombstone in Dunblane Churchyard with a curious epitaph on a woman so designated. It is clever, but its humour is of too coarse a type for publication. Accompanying it is a ludicrous cartoon, which, it is suggested, may be the work of Captain Grose. The third set of verses are those on hearing a mavis sing on the 25th of January. They are bound up with a large number of documents, many copies, some originals, of great interest to

antiquarians, to Dumfries, and its district. Among these is a copy of the letter addressed by the Duke, who is the object of Burns's satire, to King George III., praying for a restoration to the Royal favour, which he had lost in consequence of the support extended by him to the Prince Regent.

Just published, First attempted Translation of Burns into Italian.

POESIE DI ROBERT BURNS. Prima Versione Italiana, di Ulysse Ortensi, autore della traduzione della, "Poesie del Poe." With English Preface by John Muir, Galston.

In January, 1892, an Italian gentleman, Signor Ulysse Ortensi, published a translation of Edgar Allan Poe's poems, purporting to be *prima versioni Italiana in prosa*. Having made the acquaintance of the Signor through the mutual friend to whom the book is dedicated, I ventured to suggest that he should translate Burns, who, I thought, would be quite as good an investment for his intellectual capital as the American poet. Signor Ortensi promised to do so on condition that I would give what assistance I could, and write a short English Preface. All this has been arranged, and so far carried out satisfactorily, with the result that the first part of his Burns is now published. Having the MS. of the "Jolly Beggars," before me, perhaps I may as well give the reader a sample of our friend's version. I transcribe the first two verses of the "Soldier's Song," with the connecting "Recitativo," and the "Maid's Song" *in extenso* :—

Gli Allegri Pezzenti.

Aria—Del Soldato.

" Io sono un figlio di Marte, sono stato in malto guerra,
E mostro le me ferite e le cicatrice in qualcinque luogo io arrivo ;
Questo qui fu per una fanciulla, e quest'altra in una trinira,
Quando feci il benvenuto ai Francesi al suono del tamburo.

Il mio noviziato l'ho fatto là dove il mio capitano esalo, l'ultimo suo respiro,
Quando la sanguinosa morte se spandeva sulle altura di Abram ;
E terminai il mio negozio quando la galante partita fu ginocata.
Ed il Moro fu presso al suono del tamburo.

RECITATIVO.

' Egli finisce ; e l'assito trema,
Sopra il ruggito del coro ;
Mentre spaventati i topi voltana dietro
I buchi più recondita ;
Un valente suonatore di violino dal suo contaccio,
Egli grida " ancora ! "
Ma s'alza la marziale donna
E fa cessare l'alto fracasso.'

Aria—La Ganza del Soldato.

" Io una volta fui una fanciulla, sebbene io non possa dire quandro
E tuttora il mio piacere è proprio nei giovanotti,
Mio padre era uno di un corpo di dragoni,
Nessuna meraviglia che io sia l'amante di un soldato.
Il primo dei miei amanti fu un celebre fanfarone,
E il suo mestiere era di battere l'assordante tamburo,
Le sue gambe erano tanto solide e le sue gote erano così rosse,
Che io ebbi transporto pel pio giovane soldato.
Ma il reverendo vecchio cappellano lo mise in imbarazzo,
La sciabola io abbandonai per amore della chiesa ;
Egli avventuro l'anima ed io rischiai il corpo,
E fu allora che io mi mostrai falsa al mio giovane soldato.
Presto io fui interamente disgustata del mio santificato imbecille,
Un intiero reggimento io presi per marito,
Dal dorato sperone al piffero io fui pronta,
Non domando altro fuorché un giovane soldato.
Ma la pace essa mi ha ridotta a domandare Peleminosina per disperazione.
Finche io ritrovai il mio vecchio fanciullo alla fiera di Cunningham,
I suoi cenci del reggimento dondolava vana così allegramente,
Che il mio cuore entro di nuovo in gioia per giovane soldato.
E cosi io ho vissuto—io non so quanto
Ed ancora io posso unirmi ad un bicchiere ad un canto ;
Ma finche con ambo le mani io posso tenere un bicchier fermo,
Esso e qui per te, mio eroe, mio giovane soldato.

Signor Ortensi has not entered into the present undertaking in the hope of making a fortune thereby. He knows better. His Poe scarcely cleared itself, and he will be pleased if Burns turns out a somewhat better speculation. There are, as I know, many students and collectors of Burns literature who would like to procure a copy of this the first translation of Burns into Italian. I have received a good many names from America. The price is four shillings, post paid, for

each part. There are two parts in all—one containing the poems and the other the songs.

BURNS AS A FARMER.—The following extract is from a work entitled *View of Agriculture in Ayrshire*, published in 1793. The author, Colonel Fullerton, is referred to in the *Vision*, as “Brydon’s Brave Ward.”

“In order to prevent the danger arising from horned cattle in studs and straw-yards, the best mode is to cut out the budding knob, or root of the horn, while the calf is very young. This was suggested to me by Mr. Robert Burns, whose general talents are no less conspicuous than the poetic powers which have done so much honour to the county in which he was born.”

A PAINFUL NOTE.—The following note to Mr. William Stewart, of Closeburn Castle was sold at Messrs. Sotheby’s rooms in May 1892. It is endorsed—“This day forwarded and enclosed in a letter to Mr. Burns, £3 3s od. st., and for which I hold no security in writing—WILLIAM STEWART.”

“Dumfries, January 15, 1795.

“This is a painful disagreeable letter, and the first of the kind I ever wrote—I am truly in serious distress for three or four guineas; can you, my dear sir, accommodate me? It will, indeed, truly oblige me. These accursed times, by stopping up importation, have for this year, at least, lopt off a full third part of my income, and with my large family, this to me is a distressing matter.—Farewell, and God bless you.

“R. BURNS.”

The following extracts are from the Kirk-Session Records of Mauchline:—

“APRIL 2nd, 1786.—The Session being informed that Jean Armour, an unmarried woman, is said to be with child, and that she has gone off from the place of late, to reside

elsewhere, the Session think it their duty to enquire . . . But appoint James Lamie and William Fisher to speak to the parents.”

“APRIL 9th, 1786.—James Lamie reports that he spoke to Mary Smith, mother to Jean Armour, who told him that she did not suspect her daughter to be with child, that she was gone to Paisley to see her friends, and would return soon.”

“JUNE 18th, 1786.—Jean Armour, called, compeared not, but sent a letter directed to the minister, the tenor whereof follows:—

‘I am heartily sorry that I have given and must give your Session trouble on my account. I acknowledge that I am with child, and Robert Burns in Mossiel is the father. I am with great respect,
Your most humble servant,

JEAN ARMOUR.

MACHLIN, 13th JUNE, 1786.’”

The officer is ordered to summon Robert Burns to attend this day eight days.

“JUNE 25th, 1786.—Compeared Robert Burns and acknowledges himself the father of Jean Armour’s child[ren].*

ROBERT BURNS.”

“AUGUST 6th, 1786.—Robert Burns, John Smith, Mary Lindsay, Jean Armour, and Agnes Auld, appeared before the Congregation professing their repentance for the sin of fornication, and they having each appeared two several Sabbaths formerly were this day rebuked and absolved from the scandal.”†

“AUGUST 5th, 1788.—Compeared Robert Burns with Jean Armour, his alleged spouse. They both acknowledged their irregular marriage, and their sorrow for that irregularity, and desiring that the Session will take such steps as may seem to them proper in order to the solemn confirmation of the said marriage.

The Session taking this affair under their consideration agree that they both be rebuked for their acknowledged irregularity, and that

* The letters in brackets appear to have been added in at a later time, in lighter ink than that employed for the rest of the word.

† There are no Session-Book entries about the two previous appearances of Burns, but we know from a letter of his to Richmond (Scott Donglas, IV., 134), that the date of one of these appearances was July 9th.

they be taken solemnly engaged to adhere faithfully to one another as husband and wife all the days of their life.

In regard the session have a tittle [*sic*] in law to some fine for behoof of the poor, they agree to refer to Mr. Burns his own generosity. The above sentence was accordingly executed, and the Session absolved the said parties from any scandal on this account.

WILLIAM AULD, *Moderator.*

ROBERT BURNS.
JEAN ARMOUR.

Mr. Burns gave a guinea note for behoof of the poor."

REID'S MINIATURE PORTRAIT OF BURNS.—In the correspondence of Burns we find mention made of the following six portraits of himself, which, with the exception of the last named, have all been traced to their respective owners:—(1) Nasmyth's oval bust portrait, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, (cat. No. 34): (2) Beugo's engraving of this picture; Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, (cat. No. 139 of engraved portraits): (3) Mier's silhouette profile, also in the collection of the last named Gallery (cat. No. 156): (4) the picture by David Allan, illustrating the *Cottar's Saturday Night*, in the possession of Mrs. Hutchinson, daughter of Colonel James Glencairn Burns: (5) the portrait painted by an unknown artist, then on a flying visit to Dumfries, in the collection of the late Rev. Dr. P. Hately Waddell: and (6) the portrait on ivory by Reid, (Alexander Read)? Dumfries, described in Volume II. of BURNSIANA.

I have received from an antiquarian gentleman a most interesting collection of notes, consisting of unpublished details concerning Reid and his family, which I intend publishing shortly. Meantime, I shall be obliged to any reader who could, and would, furnish me with particulars respecting Reid, his life, and style of painting, and where his drawings may be seen. I have only succeeded in expounding the following particulars: In 1770, Alexander Reid, exhibited in London "A head of Mr. Ouchterlony, born in the year 1691." He is mentioned by Allan Cunningham in his "British Painters" as having

painted the heads of Burns and his Jean on ivory; and, in a letter to Mrs. Riddell, the poet says: "I am just sitting to Reid of this town [Dumfries is meant] for a miniature, and I think he has hit by far the best likeness of me ever taken." There is also a portrait of Highland Mary amissing. It is said to be an original.

Two UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.—To Mr. Gavin Hamilton, Mauchline:—

Machline, October 18th, 1783.

SIR,—As you are pleased to give us the offer of a private bargain of your cows you intend for sale, my brother and I this day took a look of them, and a friend with us, on whose judgment we could something depend, to enable us to form an estimate. If you are still intending to let us have them in that way, please appoint a day that we may wait on you, and either agree amongst ourselves or else fix on men to whom we may refer it, tho' I hope we will not need any reference.—I am, Sir, Your humble Servt., ROBERT BURNES.

P.S.—Whatever of your dairy utensils you intend to dispose of we will probably purchase. R. B.

To Alex. Blair, Esquire, Catrine House, Catrine.

Machline, 3rd April, 1788.

SIR,—I returned here yesterday, and received your letter, for which I return you my heartiest and warmest thanks. I am afraid I cannot at this moment accede to your request, as I am much harrassed with the care and anxiety of farming business, which at present is not propitious to poetry; but if I have an opportunity you shall learn of my progress in a few weeks.

I cannot but feel gratitude to you for the kindly manner by which you have shewn your interest in my endeavours; and I remain, Your obedient servant, ROBERT BURNS.

In the above letter to Mr. Hamilton, to whom Burns addressed the poetical Dedication of his Kilmarnock edition, we have an instance of the Poet spelling his name with two syllables. The letter to Mr. Robert

Aitken, dated April 3rd, 1786, is generally considered as the last document, with an exception to be mentioned, to which he exhibited this form of his surname. Chambers notes that, in the records of the St. James' Tarbolton Lodge, he signs the minutes, as Depute-master, from 27th July, 1784, to 1st

March, 1786, "Robert Burness," after which date, the name appears contracted into the form in which it is known all over the world. However, in writing to his relations in Montrose, he continued the old spelling for some months longer.

XXI.—A BURNS PILGRIMAGE.

By "H. H." In the CENTURY MAGAZINE, September, 1883.

A SHINING-BEACHED crescent of country facing to the sunset, and rising higher and higher to the east till it becomes mountain, is the county of Ayrshire, fair and famous among the Southern Scotch Highlands. To a sixty-mile measure by air, between its north and south promontories, it stretches a curving coast of ninety ; and when Robert Burns strolled over its breezy uplands, he saw always beautiful and mysterious silver lines of land thrusting themselves out into the mists of the sea, pointing to far-off island peaks, seeming sometimes to bridge and sometimes to wall vistas only ending in sky. These lines are as beautiful, elusive, and luring now as then, and in the alienable loyalty of nature bear testimony to-day to their lover.

This is the greatest crown of the hero and the poet. Other great men hold fame by failing records which moth and fire destroy. The places that knew them know them no more when they are dead. Marble and canvas and parchment league in vain to keep green his memory who did not love and consecrate by his life-blood, in fight or in song, the soil where he trod. But for him who has done this,—who fought well, sang well,—the morning cloud, and the wild rose, and broken blades of grass under men's feet, become immortal witnesses ; so imperishable, after all, are what we are in the habit of calling the "perishable things of this earth."

More than two hundred years ago, when the followers and holders of the different baronies of Ayrshire compared respective dignities and values, they made a proverb which ran :—

" Carrick for a man ; Kyle for a coo ; Cunningham for butter and cheese ; Galloway for woo."

Before the nineteenth century set in, the proverb should have been changed, for Kyle is the land through which "Bonny Doon" and Irvine Water run ; and there has been never a man in all Carrick of whom Carrick can be proud, as is Kyle of Robert Burns. It has been said that a copy of his poems lies on every Scotch cottager's shelf, by the side of the Bible. This is probably not very far from the truth. Certain it is, that in the villages where he dwelt there seems to be no man, no child, who does not apparently know every detail of the life he lived there, nearly a hundred years ago.

"Will ye be driving over to Tarbolton in the morning ?" said the pretty young vice-ländlady of the King's Arms at Ayr, when I wrote my name in her visitor's book late one Saturday night.

"What made you think of that ?" I asked, amused.

"And did ye not come on account o' Burns ?" she replied. "There's been a many from your country here by reason of him this summer. I think you love him in America a'most as well as we do oursel's. It's vary seldom the English come to see anythin' aboot him. They've so many poets o' their own, I suppose, is the reason o' their not thinkin' more o' Burns."

All that there was unflattering in this speech I forgave by reason of the girl's sweet low voice, pretty grey eyes, and gentle, refined hospitality. She might have been the daughter of some country gentleman, welcom-

ing a guest to the house. And she took as much interest in making all the arrangements for my drive to Tarbolton the next morning as if it had been a pleasure excursion for herself. It is but a dull life she leads, helping her widowed mother keep the King's Arms—dull, and unprofitable too, I fear, for it takes four men-servants and seven women to keep up the house, and I saw no symptom of any coming or going of customers in it. A stillness as of a church in week-days reigned throughout the establishment. "At the races and when the yeomanry come," she said, there was something to do; but "in the winter nothing, except at the times of the county balls. You know, ma'am, we've many county families here," she remarked with gentle pride, "and they all stop with us."

There is a compensation to the lower orders of a society where ranks and castes are fixed, which does not readily occur at first sight to the democratic mind naturally rebelling against such defined distinctions. It is very much to be questioned whether, in a republic, the people who find themselves temporarily lower down in the social scale than they like to be or expect to stay, feel, in their consciousness of the possibility of rising, half so much pride or satisfying pleasure as do the lower classes in England, for instance, in their relations with those whom they serve, whose dignity they seem to share by ministering to it.

The way from Ayr to Tarbolton must be greatly changed since the day when the sorrowful Burns family trod it, going from the Mount Oliphant Farm to that of Lochlea. Now it is for miles a smooth road, on which horse's hoofs ring merrily, and neat little stone houses, with pretty yards, line it on both sides for some distance. The ground rises almost immediately, so that the dwellers in these little suburban houses get fine off-looks seaward and a wholesome breeze in at their windows. The houses are built joined by twos, with a yard in common. They have three rooms besides the kitchen, and they rent for twenty-five pounds a year; so no industrious man of Ayr need be badly lodged. Where the houses leave off, hedges begin—thorn and beech, untrimmed and luxuriant, with great outbursts of white honeysuckle and

sweet-brier at intervals. As far as the eye could see were waving fields of wheat, oats, and "rye-grass," which last being just ripe was of a glorious red colour. The wheat-fields were rich and full, sixty bushels to the acre. Oats, which do not take so kindly to the soil and air, produce sometimes only forty-eight.

Burns was but sixteen when his father moved from Mount Oliphant to the Lochlea farm, in the parish of Tarbolton. It was in Tarbolton that he first went to a dancing-school, joined the Freemasons, and organised the club which, no doubt, cost him dear, "The Bachelors of Tarbolton." In the beginning, this club consisted only of five members besides Burns and his brother; afterward it was enlarged to sixteen. Burns drew up the rules, and the last one—the tenth—is worth remembering, as an unconscious defining on his part of his ideal of human life:—

"Every man proper for a member of this society must have a friendly, honest, open heart, above everything dirty or mean, and must be a professed lover of one or more of the sex. The proper person for this society is a cheerful, honest-hearted lad, who, if he has a friend that is true, and a mistress that is kind, and as much wealth as genteelly to make both ends meet, is just as happy as this world can make him."

Walking to-day through the narrow streets of Tarbolton, it is well-nigh impossible to conceive of such rollicking good cheer having made abiding-place there. It is a close, packed town, the houses of stone or white plaster—many of them low, squalid, with thatched roofs and walls awry; those that are not squalid are grim. The streets are winding and tangled; the people look poor and dull. As I drove up to the "Crown Inn," the place where the Tarbolton Freemasons meet now, and where some of the relics of Burns's Mason days are kept, the "first bells" were ringing in the belfry of the old church opposite, and the landlord of the inn replied with a look of great embarrassment to my request to see the Burns relics.

"It's the Sabbath, mem."

Then he stood still scratching his head for

a few moments, and then sets off, at full run, down the street without another word.

"He's gone to the head Mason," explained the landlady. "It takes three to open the chest. I think ye'll na see it the day," and she turned on her heel with a frown and left me.

"They make much account o' the Sabbath in this country," said my driver. "Another day ye'd do better."

Thinking of Burns's lines to the "Unco Guid," I strolled over into the church-yard opposite, to await the landlord's return. The bell-ringer had come down, and followed me curiously about among the graves. One very old stone had carved upon it two high-top boots; under these, two low shoes; below these two kneeling figures, a man and a woman, cut in high relief; no inscription of any sort.

"What can it mean?" I asked.

The bell-ringer could not tell; it was so old nobody knew anything about it. His mother, now ninety years of age, remembered seeing it when she was a child, and it looked just as old then as now.

"There's a many strange things in this grave-yard," said he; and then he led me to a corner where, inclosed by swinging chains, and stone posts, was a carefully kept square of green turf, on which lay a granite slab. "Every year comes the money to pay for keeping that grass green," he said, "and no name to it. It's been going on that way for fifty years."

The stone wall around the grave-yard was dilapidated, and in parts was falling down.

"I suppose this old wall was here in Burns's time," I said.

"Ay, yes," said the bell-ringer, and pointing to a low, thatched cottage just outside it, "and yon shop—many's the time he's been in it playin' his tricks."

The landlord of the inn now came running up, with profuse apologies for the ill success of his mission. He had been to the head Mason, hoping he would come over and assist in the opening of the chest, in which were kept a Mason's apron worn by Burns, some jewels of his, and a book of minutes kept by him. But "bein' s it's the Sabbath," and "he's sick in bed," and it was "against

the rules to open the regalia chest unless three Masons were present," the kindly landlord, piling up reason after reason, irrespective of their consistency with each other, went on to explain that it would be impossible; but I might see the chair in which Burns always sat. This was a huge oaken chair, black with age, and furrowed with names cut deep in the wood. It was shaped and proportioned like a child's high chair, and had precisely such a rest for the feet as is put on children's high chairs. To this day the Grand Mason sits in it at their meetings, and will so long as the St. James Lodge exists.

"They've been offered hundreds of pounds for that chair, mem, plain as it is. You'd not think it; but there's no money'd buy it from the lodge," said the landlord.

The old club-house where the jolly "Bachelors of Tarbolton" met in Burns's day, is a low, two-roomed, thatched cottage, half in ruins. The room where the bachelors smoked, drank, and sang, is now little more than a cellar filled with rubbish and filth,—nothing left but the old fire place to show that it was ever inhabited. In the other half of the cottage lives a labourer's family,—father, mother, and a young child: their one room, with its bed built into the wall, and their few delf dishes on the dresser, is probably much like the room in which Burns first opened his wondrous eyes. The man was lying on the floor playing with the baby. At the name of Burns, he sprang out with a hearty "Ay, weel," and ran out in his blue stocking feet to show me the cellar, of which, it was plainly to be seen, he was far prouder than of his more comfortable side of the house. The name by which the Inn was called in Burns's day he did not know. But "He's a Mason over there: he'll know," he cried; and, before I could prevent him, he had darted, still shoeless, across the road, and asked the question of a yet poorer labourer, who was taking his Sunday on his door-sill with two bairns between his knees. He had heard, but had "forgotten." "Feyther'll know," said the wife, coming forward with the third bairn, a baby, in her arms. "I'll rin an' ask feyther." The old man tottered out and gazed with a vacant, feeble look at me, while he replied impatiently to his

daughter : "Manson's Inn, 'twas called ; ye've heard it times eneuch."

"I dare say you always drink Burns's health at the lodge when you meet," I said to the labourer.

"Ay, ay, his health's ay dronkit," he said, with a coarse laugh, "weel dronkit."

A few rods to the east, and down the very road Burns was wont to come and go between Lochlea and Tarbolton, still stands "Willie's mill,"—cottage, and mill, and shed, and barn, all in one low, long, oddly joined (or jointed) building of irregular heights, like a telescope pulled out to its full length ; a little brook and a bit of gay garden in the front. In the winter the mill goes by water from a lake near by ; in the summer by steam—a great change since the night when Burns went

"Todlin' down on Willie's mill,"

and though he thought he

"Was na fou, but just had plenty,"

could not for the life of him make out to count the moon's horns.

"To count her horns, wi' a' my power,
I set mysel' ;—
But whether she had three or four
I could na tell."

To go by road from Tarbolton to Lochlea farm is to go around three sides of a square, east, north, and then west again. Certain it is that Burns never took so many superfluous steps to do it ; and as I drove along I found absorbing interest in looking at the little cluster of farm buildings beyond the fields, and wondering where the light-footed boy used to "cut across" for his nightly frolics. There is nothing left at Lochlea now of him or his ; nothing save a worn lintel of the old barn. The buildings are all new, and there is a look of thrift and comfort about the place, quite unlike the face it must have worn in 1784. The house stands on a rising knoll, and from the windows looking westward and seaward there must be a fine horizon and headlands to be seen at sunset. Nobody was at home on this day except a bare footed servant girl, who was keeping the house while the family were at church. She came to the door with an expression of almost alarm, at the unwonted apparition of a carriage driv-

ing down the lane on Sunday, and a stranger coming in the name of a man dead so long ago. She evidently knew nothing of Burns except that, for some reason connected with him, the old lintel was kept and shown. She was impatient of the interruption of her Sabbath, and all the while she was speaking kept her finger in her book—"Footprints of Jesus"—at the place where she had been reading, and glanced at it continually, as if it were an amulet which could keep her from harm through the worldly interlude into which she had been forced.

"It's a pity ye came on the Sabba-day," remarked the driver again, as we drove away from Lochlea. "The country people 'ull not speak on the Sabbath." It would have been useless to try to explain to him that the spectacle of this Scottish "Sabba-day" was of itself of almost as much interest as the sight of the fields in which Robert Burns had walked and worked.

The farm of Mossgiel, which was Burns's next home after Lochlea, is about three miles from Tarbolton, and only one from Mauchline. Burns and his brother Gilbert had become tenants of it a few months before their father's death in 1784. It was stocked by the joint savings of the whole family ; and each member of the family was allowed fair rates of wages for all labour performed on it. The allowance to Gilbert and to Robert was seven pounds a year each, and it is said that, during the four years that Robert lived there, his expenses never exceeded this pittance.

To Mossgiel he came with new resolutions. He had already reaped some bitter harvests from the wild oats sown during the seven years at Lochlea. He was no longer a boy. He says of himself at this time :

"I entered on Mossgiel with a full resolution, 'Come, go ; I will be wise.'"

Driving up the long straight road which leads from the highway to the hawthorn fortress in which the Mossgiel farm buildings stand, one recalls these words, and fancies the brave young fellow striding up the field, full of new hope and determination. The hawthorn hedge to-day is much higher than a man's head, and completely screens from the road the farm-house and the outbuildings behind it. The present tenants have

lived on the farm forty years, the first twenty in the same house which stood there when Robert and Gilbert Burns pledged themselves to pay one hundred and twenty pounds a year for the farm. When the house was rebuilt, twenty years ago, the old walls were used in part, and the windows were left in the same places; but, instead of the low, sloping-roofed, garret-like room upstairs, where Burns used to sleep and write, are now comfortable chambers of modern fashion.

"Were you not sorry to have the old house pulled down?" I said to the comely, aged farm-wife.

"Deed, then, I was very prood," she replied; "it had na 'coomodation, and the thatch took in the rain an' all that was vile."

In the best room of the house hung two autograph letters of Burns's plainly framed: one, his letter to the lass of —, asking her permission to print the poem he had addressed to her; the other, the original copy of the poem. These were "presented to the house by the brother of the lady," the woman said, and they had "a great value now." But when she first came to this part of the country she was "vary sorpreezed" to find the great esteem in which Burns's poetry was held. In the North, where she had lived, he was "na thocht weel of." Her father had never permitted a copy of his poems to be brought inside his doors, and had forbidden his children to read a word of them. "He thocht them too rough for us to read." It was not until she was a woman grown, and living in her husband's house, that she had ever ventured to disobey this parental command, and she did not now herself think they were "fitted for the reading of young pairsons." "There was much more discreet writin's," she said severely; an opinion which there was no gainsaying.

There is a broader horizon to be seen, looking westwards from the fields of Mossiel, than from those of Lochlea; the lands are higher and nobler of contour. Superb trees, which must have been superb a century ago, stand to right and left of the house,—beeches, ashes, oaks, and planes. The fields which are in sight from the house are now all grass-grown. I have heard that, twenty years ago, it was confidently told in which field Burns,

ploughing late in the autumn, broke into the little nest of the

"Wee sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie," whom every song-lover had known and pitied from that day to this, and whose misfortunes have answered ever since for a mint of re-assuring comparison to all of us, remembering that "the best-laid schemes o' mice an' men" must "gang aft aglee;" and the other field, also near by, where grew that mountain daisy,

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipp'd flower,"

whose name is immortal in our hearts as that of Burns. This farm-wife, however, knew nothing about them. The stern air of the north country in which she had been reared still chilled somewhat her thoughts of Burns and her interest in his inalienable bond on the fields of her farm.

It is but a mile from Mossiel's gate to Mauchline, the town of "bonnie Jean" and Nansie Tinnoch and Gavin Hamilton. Surely a strange-assorted trio to be comrades of one man. Their houses are still standing: Jean's a tumble-down, thatched cottage, looking out-of-place enough between the smart, new houses built on either side of it; Gavin Hamilton's, a dark, picturesque stone house, joined to the ruins of Mauchline Castle; and Nansie Tinnoch's, a black and dilapidated hovel, into which it takes courage to go. It stands snugged up against the wall of the old grave-yard, part below it and part above it—a situation as unwholesome as horrible; a door at the head of the narrow stair-way opening out into the grave-yard itself, and the slanting old stones leering in at the smoky windows by crowds. In the days when all the "country side" met at the open air services in this church-yard,

"Some thinkin' on their sins, an' some on their claes," no doubt Nansie Tinnoch's was a lighter, whiter, cheerier place than now; else the "Jolly Beggars" would never have gone there to tipple.

It was the nooning between services when I reached Mauchline, and church-goers from a distance were taking their beer and crackers decorously in the parlour of the inn. As the intermission was only three-quarters of an hour long, this much of involuntary dissipation was plainly forced on them; but they did not

abuse it, I can testify. They partook of it as of a Passover : young men and maidens as sober and silent as if they had been doing solemn penance for sins, as indeed, from one point of view, it might perhaps be truly said that they were.

By dint of some difficult advances I drew one or two of them into conversation about the Mossgiel farm and the disappearance of the old relics of Burns's life in that region. It was a great pity, I said, that the Mossgiel house had to be taken down.

"Deed, then, it was na such thing," spoke up an elderly man. "It was na moor than a wreck, an' I'm the mon who did it."

He wasthe landlord of the farm, it appeared. He seemed much amused at hearing of the farm-wife's disapproval of Burns's verses and of her father's prohibition of them.

"He was a heepocritical auld Radical, if ye knows him," he said, angrily. "I hope we'll never have ony worse readin' in our country than Robert Bur-r-r-ns." The prolongation of the "r" in the Scotch way of saying "Burns" is something that cannot be typographically represented. It is hardly a rolling of the "r," nor a multiplication of it ; but it takes up a great deal more time and room than any one "r" ought to.

After the landlady had shown to me the big hall where the Freemasons meet, "the Burns's Mother Lodge," and the chest which used .to hold the regalia at Tarbolton in Burns's day, and the little bedroom in which Stedman and Hawthorne had slept,—coming also to look at Burns's fields,—she told me in a mysterious whisper that there was a nephew of Burns in the kitchen, who would like to see me, if I would like to see him. "A nephew of Burns!" I exclaimed. "Weel, not exactly," she explained, "but he's a grand-nephew of Burns's wife ; she that was Jean, ye know," with a deprecating nod and lowering of the eyelid. So fast is the clutch of a Scotch neighbourhood on its traditions of offended virtue, even to-day poor Jean cannot be mentioned by a landlady in her native town without a small stone cast backward at her.

Jean's grand-nephew proved to be a middle-aged man ; not "ower weel-to-do," the landlady said. He had tried his hand at

doctoring both in Scotland and America,—a rolling stone evidently, with too much of the old fiery blood of his race in his veins for quiet and decorous prosperity. He, too, seemed only half willing to speak of poor "Jean"—his kinswoman ; but he led me to the cottage where she had lived, and pointed out the window from which she was said to have leaned out many a night listening to the songs of her lover when he sauntered across from the Whiteford Arms, Johnny Pigeon's house, just opposite, "not fou, but having had plenty" to make him merry and affectionate. Johnny Pigeon's is a "co-operative store" now ; and new buildings have altered the line of the street so that "Rob Mossgiel" would lose his way there to-day.

The room in which Burns and his "bonnie Jean" were at last married in Gavin Hamilton's house, by Hamilton himself, is still shown to visitors. This room I had a greater desire to see than any other spot in Mauchline. "We can but try," said the grand-nephew ; "but it's a small chance of seeing it the Sabbath."

The sole tenant of this house now is the widow of a son of Gavin Hamilton's. Old, blind, and nearly helpless, she lives there alone with one family servant, nearly as old as herself, but hale, hearty, and rosy as only an old Scotch woman can be. This servant opened the door for us, her cap, calico gown, and white apron all alike bristling with starch, religion, and pride of family. Her mistress would not allow the room to be shown on the Sabbath, she said. Imploringly it was explained to her that no other day had been possible, and that I had come "all the way from America."

"Ye did na do weel to tak the Sabbath," was her only reply, as she turned on her heel to go with the fruitless appeal to her mistress. Returning, she said curtly,

"She winna shew it on the Sabbath."

At this crisis my companion, who had kept in the background, stepped forward with :

"You don't know me, Elspie, do ye?"

"No, sir," she said stiffly, bracing herself up mentally against any further heathenish entreaties.

"What, not know — — ?" repeating his name in full.

Presto! as if changed by a magician's trick, the stiff, starched, religious, haughty family retainer disappeared, and there stood, in the same cap, gown, and apron, a limber, rollicking, well-nigh improper old woman, who poked the grand-nephew in the ribs, clapped him on the shoulder, chuckling, ejaculating, questioning, wondering, laughing, all in a breath. Reminiscence on reminiscence followed between them.

"An' do ye mind Barry, too?" she asked. (This was an old man-servant of the house.) "An' many's the squirrel, an' many's the gree we had."

Barry was dead. Dead also was the beautiful girl whom my companion remembered well—dead of a broken heart before she was eighteen years of age. Forbidden to marry her lover, she had drooped and pined. He went to India and died. It was in a December the news of his death came, just at Christmas time, and in the next September she followed him.

"Ay, but she was a bonnie lass," said Elspie, the tears rolling down her face.

"I dare say she (nodding her head toward the house)—I dare say she's shed many a salt tear over it, but naebody'll ever know she repented," quoth the grand-nephew.

"Ay, ay," said Elspie. "There's a wee bit closet in every hoo."

"Twas in that room she died," pointing up to a small ivy-shaded window. "I closed her eyes wi' my hands. She's never spoken of. She was a bonnie lass."

The picture of this desolate old woman, sitting there alone in her house, helpless, blind, waiting for death to come and take her to meet that daughter whose young heart was broken by her cruel will, seemed to shadow the very sunshine on the greensward in the court. The broken arches and crumbling walls of the old stone abbey ruins seemed, in their ivy mantles, warmly, joyously venerable by contrast with the silent, ruined, stony old human heart still beating in the house they joined.

In spite of my protestations, the grand-nephew urged Elspie to show us the room. She evidently now longed to do it; but, casting a fearful glance over her shoulder, said:

"I daur na! I daur na! I could na open

the door that she'd na hear't," and she seemed much relieved when I made haste to assure her that on no account would I go into the room without her mistress's permission. So we came away, leaving her gazing regretfully after us, with her hand shading her eyes from the sun.

Going back from Mauchline to Ayr, I took another road, farther to the south than the one leading through Tarbolton, and much more beautiful, with superb beech trees meeting overhead, and gentlemen's country seats, with great parks, on either hand.

On this road is Montgomerie Castle, walled in by grand woods, which Burns knew so well.

*"Ye banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unsauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry,
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary."*

Sitting in the sun, on a bench outside the gate-house, with his little granddaughter on his lap, was the white-haired gate-keeper. As the horses' heads turned toward the gate, he arose slowly, without a change of muscle, and set down the child, who accepted her altered situation also without a change of muscle in her sober little face.

"Is it allowed to go in?" asked the driver.

"Eh—ye'll not be calling at the hoo?" asked the old man, surprised.

"No, I'm a stranger; but I like to see all the fine places in your country," I replied.

"I've no orders," looking at the driver reflectively; "I've no orders—but—a decent pairson"—looking again scrutinizingly at me,—"I think there can be no hairm," and he opened the gate.

Grand trees, rolling tracts of velvety turf, an ugly huge house of weather-beaten stone, with white pillars in front; conservatories joining the wings to the centre; no attempt at decorative landscape art; grass, trees, distances,—these were all; but there were miles of these. It was at least a mile's drive to the other entrance to the estate, where the old stone gate-way house was in ruin. I fancy that it was better kept up in the days before

an Earl of Eglintoun sold it to a plain Mr. Patterson.

At another fine estate nearer Ayr, where an old woman was gate-keeper and also had "no orders" about admitting strangers, the magic word "America" threw open the gates with a sweep, and bent the old dame's knees in a courtesy which made her look three times as broad as she was long. This estate had been "always in the Oswald family, an' is likely always to be, please God," said the loyal creature, with another courtesy at the mention, unconsciously devout as that of the Catholic when he crosses himself. "An' it's a fine country ye've yersel' in America," she added, politely. The Oswald estate has acres of beautiful curving uplands, all green and smooth and open; a lack of woods near the house, but great banks of sunshine instead, make a beauty all their own; and the Ayr Water running through the grounds, and bridged gracefully here and there, is a possession to be coveted. From all points is a clear sight of sea, and headlands north and south,—Ayr harbour lying like a crescent, now silver, now gold, afloat between blue sky and green shore, and dusky gray roof-lines of the town.

The most precious thing in all the parish of Ayr is the cottage in which Burns was born. It is about two miles south from the centre of the town, on the shore of "Bonnie Doon," and near Alloway Kirk. You cannot go thither from Ayr over any road except the one Tam o' Shanter took: it has been straightened a little since his day, but many a rod of it is the same that Maggie trod; and Alloway Kirk is as ghostly a place now, even at high noon, as can be found "frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groat's." There is nothing left of it but the walls and the gable, in which the ancient bell still hangs, intensifying the silence by its suggestion of echoes long dead.

The Burns Cottage is now a sort of inn, kept by an Englishman whose fortunes would make a tale by themselves. He fought at Balaklava and in our civil war; and side by side on the walls of his dining-room hang, framed, his two commissions in the Pennsylvania Volunteers and the menu of the Balaklava Banquet, given in London, to the brave fellows

that came home alive after that fight. He does not love the Scotch people.

"I would not give the Americans for all the Scotch ever born," he says, and is disposed to speak with unjust satire of their apparent love of Burns, which he ascribes to a perception of his recognition by the rest of the world and a shame-faced desire not to seem to be behind-hand in paying tribute to him.

"Oh, they let on to think much of him," he said. "It's money in their pockets."

The room in which Burns was born is still unaltered, except in having one more window let in. Originally, it had but one small square window of four panes. The bed is like the beds in all the old Scotch cottages, built into the wall, similar to those still seen in Norway. Stifling enough the air surely must have been in the cupboard bed in which the "waly boy" was born.

"The gossip keekit in his loof;
Quo' scho, 'Wha lives will see the proof,—
This waly boy will be nae coof;
I think we'll ca' him Robin.'"

Before he was many days old, or, as some traditions have it, on the very night he was born, a violent storm "tirled" away part of the roof of the poor little "clay biggin," and mother and babe were forced to seek shelter in a neighbour's cottage. Misfortune and Robin early joined company and never parted. The little bedroom is now the showroom of the inn, and is filled with tables piled with the well-known boxes, pincushions, baskets, paper-cutters, etc., made from sycamore wood grown on the banks of Doon and Ayr. These articles are all stamped with some pictures of scenery associated with Burns or with quotations from his verses. It is impossible to see all this money-making without thinking what a delicious, rollicking bit of verse Burns would write about it himself if he came back to-day. There are those who offer for sale articles said to be made out of the old timbers of the Mossiel house; but the Balaklava Englishman scouts all that as the most barefaced imposture. "There wasn't an inch of that timber," he says,—and he was there when the house was taken down—"which wasn't worm-eaten and rotten; not enough to make a knife-handle of!"

One feels disposed to pass over in silence

the "Burns Monument," which was built in 1820, at a cost of over three thousand pounds; "a circular temple supported by nine fluted Corinthian columns emblematic of the nine muses," say the guide-books. It stands in a garden overlooking the Doon, and is a painful sight. But in a room in the base of it are to be seen some relics at which no Burns lover can look unmoved : the Bibles he gave to Highland Mary, the ring with which he wedded Jean (taken off after her death), and two rings containing some of his hair.

It is but a few steps from this monument down to a spot on the "banks o' bonnie Doon," from which is a fine view of the "auld brig." This shining, silent water, and the overhanging, silent trees, and the silent bell in the gable of Alloway Kirk, speak more eloquently of Burns than do all nine of the Corinthian muse-dedicated pillars in his monument.

So do the twa brigs of Ayr, which still stand at the foot of High Street, silently re-crminating each other as of old.

"I doubt na, frien', ye'll think ye'r nae sheep-shank
When ye are streekit o'er frae bank to bank,"

sneers the Auld ; and

" Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
Where twa wheelbarrows tremble when they meet,
Your ruined, formless bulk o' stane and lime,
Compare with bonny brigs o' modern time?"

retorts the New ; and "the sprites that owre the brigs of Ayr preside" never interrupt the quarrel. Spite of all its boasting, however, the new bridge cracked badly two years ago, and had to be taken down and entirely rebuilt.

The dingy little inn where

" Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious,"

is still called by his name, and still preserves, as its chief claims to distinction, the big wooden mug out of which Tam drank and the chair in which he so many market nights

" gat planted unco richt."

The chair is of oak, well-nigh black as ebony, and furrowed thick with names cut upon it. The smart young landlady who now keeps the house commented severely on this desecration of it, and said that for some years the house had been "keepit" by a widow, who was "in no sense up to the beesiness," and

"a' people did as they pleased in the hoos in her day." The mug has a metal rim and base, but spite of these it has needed to be clasped together again by three ribs of cane, riveted on. "Money couldn't buy it," the landlady said. It belongs to the house, is mentioned always in the terms of lease, and the house has changed hands but four times since Tam's day.

In a tiny stone cottage in the southern suburbs of Ayr live two nieces of Burns, daughters of his youngest sister Isabella. They are vivacious still, and eagerly alive to all that goes on in the world, though they must be well on in the seventies. The day I called they had "just received a newspaper from America," they said. "Perhaps I knew it. It was called 'The Democrat.'" As I was not able to identify it by that description, the younger sister made haste to fetch it. It proved to be a paper printed in Madison, Iowa. The old ladies were much interested in the approaching American election, had read all they could find about General Garfield, and were much impressed by the wise reticence of General Grant. "He must be a very cautious man; disna say enough to please people," they said, with sagacious nods of approbation. They remembered Burns's wife very well, had visited her when she was living, a widow, at Dumfries, and told with glee a story which they said she herself used to narrate, with great relish, of a peddler lad who, often coming to the house with wares to sell in the kitchen, finally expressed to the servant his deep desire to see Mrs. Burns. She accordingly told him to wait, and her mistress would no doubt before long come into the room. Mrs. Burns came in, stood for some moments talking with the lad, bought some trifle of him, and went away. Still he sat waiting. At last the servant asked why he did not go. He replied that she had promised he should see Mrs. Burns.

"But ye have seen her. That was she," said the servant.

"Eh, eh?" said the lad. "Na! never tell me now that was 'bonnie Jean!'"

Burns's mother, too, their grandmother, they recollect well, and had often heard her tell of the time when the family lived at Lochlea, and Robert, spending his evenings

at the Tarbolton merry-makings with the Bachelors' Club or the Masons, used to come home late in the night, and she used to sit up to let him in. These doings sorely displeased the father, and at last he said grimly, one night, that he would sit up to open the door for Robert. Trembling with fear, the mother went to bed and did not close her eyes, listening apprehensively for the angry meeting between father and son. She heard the door open, the old man's stern tone, Robert's gay reply, and in a twinkling more the two were sitting together over the fire, the father splitting his sides with half unwilling laughter at the boy's inimitable descriptions and mimicry of the scenes he had left. Nearly two hours they sat there in this way, the mother all the while cramming the bed-clothes into her mouth, lest her own laughter should remind her husband how poorly he was carrying out his threats. After that night "Rob" came home at what hour he pleased, and there was nothing more heard of his father's sitting up to reprove him.

They believed that Burns's intemperate habits had been greatly exaggerated. Their mother was a woman twenty-five years old and the mother of three children when he died, and she had never once seen him the "waur for liquor." "There were vary mony idle people i' the warl'd, an' a great deal o' talk," they said. After his father's death, he assumed the position of the head of the house, and led in family prayers each morning, and everybody said, even the servants, that there were never such beautiful prayers heard. He was a generous soul. After he left home he never came back for a visit, however poor he might be, without bringing a present for every member of the family; always a pound of tea for his mother, "and tea was tea then," the old ladies added. To their mother he gave a copy of Thomson's "Seasons," which they still have. They have also some letters of his, two of which I read with great interest. They were to his brother and were full of good advice. In one he says :

"I intended to have given you a sheetful of counsels, but some business has prevented me. In a word, learn taciturnity. Let that be your motto. Though you had the wisdom of Newton or the wit of Swift, garrulousness would lower you in the eyes of your fellow-creatures."

In the other, after alluding to some village tragedy, in which great suffering had fallen on a woman, he says :

"Women have a kind of steady sufferance which qualifies them to endure much beyond the common run of men; but perhaps part of that fortitude is owing to their short-sightedness, as they are by no means famous for seeing remote consequences in their real importance."

The old ladies said that their mother had liked "Jean" on the whole, though "at first not so weel, on account of the connection being what it was." She was kindly, cheery, "never bonny;" but had a good figure, danced well and sang well, and worshipped her husband. She was "not intellectual;" "but there's some say a poet shouldn't have an intellectual wife," one of the ingenuous old spinsters remarked, interrogatively. "At any rate, she suited him, an' it was ill speering at her after all that was said and done," the younger niece added, with real feeling in her tone. Well might she say so. If there be a touching picture in all the long list of faithful and ill-used women, it is that of "bonnie Jean"—the unwedded mother of children, the forgiving wife of a husband who betrayed others as he had betrayed her—when she took into her arms and nursed and cared for her husband's child, born of an outcast woman, and bravely answered all curious questioners with, "It's a neebor's bairn I'm bringin' up." She wrought for herself a place and an esteem of which her honest and loving humility little dreamed.

There is always something sad in seeking out the spot where a great man has died. It is like living over the days of his death and burial. The more sympathetically we have felt the spell of the scenes in which he lived his life, the more vitalized and vitalizing that life was, the more are we chilled and depressed in the presence of places on which his wearied and suffering gaze rested last. As I drove through the dingy, confused, and ugly streets of Dumfries, my chief thought was, "How Burns must have hated this place!" Looking back on it now, I have a half regret that I ever saw it, that I can recall vividly the ghastly grave-yard of St Michael's, with its twenty-six thousand grave-stones and monuments, crowded closer than they would be in a marble-yard, ranged in rows against the

walls without any pretence of association with the dust they affect to commemorate. What a ballad Burns might have written about such a show! And what would it not have been given to him to say of the "Genius of Coila finding her favourite son at the plough, and casting her mantle over him," *i.e.*, the sculptured monument, or, as the sexton called it, "Máwsolem," under which he has had the misfortune to be buried. A great Malvern bath-woman, bringing a bathing-sheet to an unwilling patient, might have been the model for the thing. It is hideous beyond description, and in a refinement of ingenuity has been made uglier still by having the spaces between the pillars filled in with glass. The severe Scotch weather, it seems, was discolouring the marble. It is a pity that the zealous guardians of its beauty did not hold it precious enough to be boarded up altogether.

The house in which Burns spent the first eighteen months of his dreary life in Dumfries is now a common tenement-house at the lower end of a poor and narrow street. As I was reading the tablet let into the wall, bearing his name, a carpenter went by, carrying his box of tools slung on his shoulder.

"He only had three rooms there," said the man, "those three up there," pointing to the windows; "two rooms and a little kitchen at the back."

The house which is usually shown to strangers as his is now the home of the master of the industrial school, and is a comfortable little building joining the school. Here Burns lived for three years; and here, in a small chamber not more than twelve by fifteen feet in size, he died on the 21st of July, 1796, sadly harassed in his last moments by anxiety about money matters and about the approaching illness of his faithful Jean.

Opening from this room is a tiny closet lighted by one window.

"They say he used to make up his poetry in here," said the servant-girl; "but I dare say it is only a supposeetion; still, it 'ud be a quiet place."

"They say there was a great lot o' papers up here when he died," she added, throwing

open the narrow door of a ladder-like stairway that led up into the garret, "writin's that had been sent to him from all over the world, but nobody knew what become of them. Now that he's so much thought aboot, I wonder his widow did not keep them. But, ye know, the poor thing was just comin' to be ill; that was the last thing he wrote when he knew he was dyin', for some one to come and stay with her; and I dare say she was in such a sewither she did not know about anything."

The old stone stairs were winding and narrow—painted now, and neatly carpeted, but worn into depressions here and there by the plodding of feet. Nothing in the house, above or below, spoke to me of Burns so much as did they. I stood silent and rapt on the landing, and saw him coming wearily up, that last time; after which he went no more out forever, till he was borne in the arms of men, and laid away in St. Michael's graveyard to rest.

That night, at my lonely dinner in the King's Arms, I had the Edinburgh papers. There were in them three editorials headed with quotations from Burns's poems, and an account of the sale in Edinburgh, that week, of an autograph letter of his for ninety-four pounds!

Does he think sadly, even in heaven, how differently he might have done by himself and by Earth, if Earth had done for him then a tithe of what it does now? Does he know it? Does he care? And does he listen when, in lands he never saw, great poets sing of him in words simple and melodious as his own?

"For now he haunts his native land
As an immortal youth : his hand
Guides every plough ;
He sits beside each ingle-nook,
His voice is in each rushing brook,
Each rustling bough.

" His presence haunts this room to-night,
A form of mingled mist and light
From that far coast.
Welcome beneath this roof of mine !
Welcome ! this vacant chair is thine,
Dear guest and ghost ! " *

* Longfellow.

XXII.—MR. ROBERT FORD ON BURNS.

From an Address delivered before the Barlinnie Burns Club, January 25th, 1893.

THE first meeting of the Barlinnie Burns Club was held in the Officers' Recreation Hall, on the 25th January, 1893, when about fifty of the members and officers sat down to partake of the good things provided, after which the usual loyal and patriotic toasts were pledged.

Mr. ROBERT FORD, the well-known author of "Thistledown," "Humorous Scotch Readings," "The Harp of Perthshire," etc., on rising to give the toast of the evening, said—
Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—In rising here, at what is practically the first meeting of the Barlinnie Burns Club, to propose the toast of "The Immortal Memory" of the Bard whose genius is being honoured to-night in every land where the wandering Scot has found a home—and where has he not?—I do so at once with the proud consciousness of the importance of the duty which you have laid upon me, and a humiliating sense of my inability to do anything like honour to the occasion. This meeting has been hurriedly got up, and even such poor thoughts as I have on the subject have had to be hastily thrown together. What I am able to say now, therefore, may not be so pungent, and may lack the ornateness which, with more leisure, I, even I, might be able to give to it; but I will claim this for what is to follow, that it will all be spoken in love; that it will be the genuine utterance of one who has been an ardent worshipper at the shrine of his genius—who has learned much from him—much of the world, and much of his own heart—and who yields to no man in admiration for the quality of his great human heart, and the liquid melody and power of his song-gift.

We claim for Burns, Sir, a place among the chosen few who are at once national and universal, moving with absolute mastery the hearts of their countrymen, yet no less touching the whole heart of man. We place him in the very front rank of the immortals—cheek for jowl with Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe. These were all severally the outcome, not of a special culture merely,

nor of a passing time, but of a nation's life, of whose growth they are the perfect flower. Not every national poet is also catholic. The bagpipe, as one has finely put it, stirs the heart of the Gael as it sounds a pibroch in Lochaber or Lochiel, but it needs a Celtic ear thoroughly to relish its drone and chanter. It hardly discourses the Orphic music that takes captive all the world. So, too, there are poets that move their own countrymen to tears or laughter as they will, and who yet do not rank in this little group of world-poets. France, keen and trenchant as its mind is, is not represented there, nor is Spain with all its wealth of rich and subtle thought. But Robert Burns, even although he framed his song in the dialect speech peculiar to our own little land, takes his seat among the choice of the chosen. He has not, indeed, written an "Illiad," a "Hamlet," a "Divina Comedia," or a "Faust,"—he had not the opportunity in that brief, stormy life of his—possibly he had not even the power; I do not say he was a Homer, a Shakespeare, a Dante, or a Goethe, or that he could ever have done what they did, but, on the other hand, he has done what they did not—he has sung songs that have captivated the common heart of humanity, and so has won a place for himself in universal estimation which might be coveted by the best of them. As sure as there is only one Shakespeare, there is only one Burns—he cannot be repeated—and it is the proud boast of Scotland (his "ancient mither" as he loved to call her) that he was her son. It is this same pride—the glory of being able to call him a brother Scot—which brings us together to-night, to sing his songs, to recite his poems, to drop a tear of pity over his untimely fate, to lament his backslidings, but, above all, to emphasize his many virtues, and to thank the Giver of all for the dower of his genius by which he has shed so much light and love and life on the paths of struggling humanity.

Of the individual incidents in Burns's career it is not my purpose here to remind you. His life is a familiar story to the most of us,

and much of his brief history is not very pleasant reading. But, if Burns sinned—and he did sin—he suffered severely for it ; yea, he sinned egregiously, but never did sinful man repent more bitterly. If he sometimes rejoiced in the heaven of folly at night he languished in the hell of remorse the next day for it. This shows that he was normally sound of heart ; that although a *sinning* man he was not a *bad* man—your inveterate sinner knows no repentance. In the main, Robert Burns was a very good man—he meant well. Thus it was he was able to say to a youthful friend—

“ The gentle lowe o’ well-placed love
Luxuriantly indulge it,
But never tempt the illicit rove,
Though fate should ne’er divulge it.
I waive the quantum o’ the sin,
The hazard o’ concealing ;
But oh ! it hardens a’ within,
And petrifies the feeling.”

It was thus he was able to say—

“ When ranting round in pleasure’s ring
Religion may be blinded ;
Or if she gi’e a random sting
It may be little minded ;
But when on life we’re tempest driven,
A conscience but a canker,
A correspondence fix’d wi’ Heaven
Is sure a noble anchor.”

His life as a *man*, perhaps was not a great success ; but as Carlyle graphically puts it—“ Granted that the ship comes into the harbour with her masts broken and her sails torn, before you pronounce judgment on the captain ask whether he sailed round the Horn or came in through the Isle of Dogs.” Gentlemen, Burns came through the Isle of Dogs. This said, I will make no more mention of his faults and failings. I have referred to them only because there is a class of people in the world who, with ghoulish taste, are ever prone to remind us of the wicked things which he did, and who cannot see the sun for the spots that are on it—who refuse the rose because it grew beside a thorn. You may tell them that David the Psalmist has been appointed to a place among the saints of Holy Writ, not on account of his vices, but his virtues ; yet they will not yield the same toleration to Robert Burns.

They know nothing of the charity which covereth a multitude of sins. But enough !

What of Burns ? What of the breadth of his humanity ? What of the wealth of his genius ? At the age of nineteen the Muse found him at the plough, and threw her mantle over him, and his mission was clear to him from that hour. He set himself at once to depict life as he found it existing around him—the common life of the common people—with all its joys, all its sorrows, all its frailties, all its virtues ; and here is the secret of his power as a poet. He has not dosed us with moral platitudes, like Pope and others of the artificial school. He has looked at everything around him from a common standpoint, and has set the world’s heart singing what it has fancied to be its *own* song and not *his*.

We have all felt, I am sure, when reading Burns for the first time that he was often telling us what had previously occurred to our own mind in a ruder way. But this so-called common power, like common sense—which is *exceptional* sense—is the rarest power of all. It is the power which makes the great painter, the great musician, and the great poet ; the power to hold the mirror up to Nature, to show virtue her own sweet face, and to reveal hypocrisy and shame in all their barren hideousness. We have all felt, even as Burns did, that

“ ‘Tis hardly in a body’s power
To keep at times frae bein’ sour,
To see how things are shared ;
That best o’ chields are whiles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to ware’t.”

But the thought only smouldered in our breast until he touched it with the torch of his lyrical genius and it became a flame. Mrs. M’Cuistan, the old domestic at Dunlop House, referring to “ The Cottar’s Saturday Night,” told her mistress—Mrs. Dunlop, the good friend of Burns—that she “ didna see onything in the poem for the folks to mak’ a wark about. Nae doot you gentles think it grand, but it’s naething but what I have seen in my ain faither’s hoose a hunder times.” What a fine compliment ! Some have said that the “ Cottar’s Saturday Night ” is Burns’s greatest poem. Carlyle preferred the wild abandon of “ The Jolly Beggars.” Burns himself considered “ Tam O’Shanter ” to be his masterpiece, and upon the whole I think

he was right. It stands alone in literature, thoroughly original, profoundly picturesque, exquisitely grand—a work possible only to the most powerful imagination. It was written in the single white heat of an exalted inspiration, and is, next to the battle of Bannockburn, perhaps the best day's work that was ever performed in Scotland.

But I must not weary you with any lengthened reference to his poems, because, rich and rare as these are, to my thinking the finer fruits of his genius are to be found elsewhere. Burns was above everything else a lyric poet—a singer of songs. It is through the melody, the power, and beauty of his songs that he has found the warm place he occupies in the heart of mankind, and because his songs give voice to the loves and aspirations of common men. Get over the difficulties of the language in which it is written, and "Auld Lang Syne" is the song of all men, no matter where they were born and bred. Every man has had a youth that is rosy in the memory of his mature life—he has "paidle'd in the burn" and "run about the braes" with some one he loved, and

" Seas between them braid ha'e rowed,
Sin' Auld Lang Syne."

In every village in the world has lived a "Duncan Gray," over whose courtship the inhabitants might sing,

" Ha, ha, the wooin' o't."

We have all had a "Mary Morrison," some of us have a "Mary in Heaven" to whom we would cry in the impassioned words of the poet—

" O Mary, dear, departed shade,
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the pangs that rend his breast?"

"John Anderson my jo" is the golden wedding song of every happy old couple. "A man's a man for a' that" has afforded a social creed to common humanity.

But we have not time to refer to his songs individually—only to those to which we have already referred let us add, "Afton Water," "Ae Fond Kiss," "Last May a braw wooer," "My Nannie's awa'," "Tam Glen," "Scots

wha ha'e," "O' a' the airts the wind can blow," "Rantin' Robin," "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon," and then we may ask where is the other single writer to whom you can credit so many songs that have a world-wide fame? These songs are not confined to Scotland or to Britain; they are sung in every land, and are as familiar and enthusiastically welcome among the Rocky Mountains as among the streams and lakes of their native Ayrshire—among the burning sands of Arabia, and under the Southern Cross of Australia, as among the heather bloom and green bracken of Auld Caledonia.

It is for his service to Scotland in the matter of songs that we specially delight to honour him. It was he, more than all else put together, who made Scottish song the glorious thing that it is. Prior to Burns's appearance on the stage of human existence what was the condition, Sir, of our national minstrelsy? We had a popular song book polluted on every page. Such of the popular songs of the time—if you except a dozen or so, "The Flowers o' the Forest," "Auld Robin Gray," "Nae luck about the hoose," "Logie o' Buchan," "Johnnie Cope," "Maggie Lauder," and "Down the burn, Davie," and one or two more—such of them, I say, with these few exceptions, as were not tainted with vulgarity and vile innuendo, were the most puerile and feckless doggerel. Burns set himself to purify these old songs, and gave us a song book which is like a human psalter by comparison. It is when we take up Ramsay's "Evergreen" and the "Tea-Table Miscellany," or Herd's collection of old songs and ballads, and look at the originals of "Dainty Davie," "She rose and loot me in," and "John Anderson my jo," and some more, that we discover the noble—and the God's work—which he performed.

It is for the purification of these old songs, and for the hundred and more original gems which he added to our song book, that we regard Robert Burns as a gift from the gods. It is for this that we can overlook so many of his faults and failings. It is for this that we delight to honour his memory—for this we are "a' sae prood o' Robin."

XXIII.—BURNS—AN ANNIVERSARY RHYME.

By ALEX. SCRIMGEOUR, AMHERST, N. S.

WHEN Scotch fousk meet in ony lan',
 At this time o' the year,
 To spend a canty oor at e'en
 Wi' mirth an' social cheer.
 To lilt sweet sangs, tell aft-tauld tales
 (That auld an' young enjoy),
 O' Wallace brave an' sturdy Bruce,
 O' Douglas or Rob Roy—
 They'll aye be sure to bring to min'
 The bard o' the "Land o' Cakes,"
 Wha's name the onward flight o' time
 But dearer ever makes.
 Near Alloway's auld haunted kirk
 In seventeen fifty-nine,
 Was born that pawky, ploughman chiel
 Wha spak' his thochts in rhyme.
 The Januar wind did whistle cauld
 When first he saw the day,
 In the humble hame o' a cottar puir,
 A biggin o' straw and clay.
 But what o' that? his humble lot
 (Tho' poverty ye'll ca' that),
 He ne'er despised but bauldly sang,
 "A man's a man for a' that."
 An' a man was he, aye a king o' men,
 Wi' a heart sae large an' free
 As wad brithers mak' o' a mankind
 An' hae them a' to gree.
 But ready he, wi' tongue an' pen,
 To tear awa' the mask
 Frae hypocrites an' cantin' rogues,
 An' bring them weel to task.
 An' he had fauts, (for wha has no'?)
 Fautes that were deep an' strang,

Which marred his joys, embittered griefs,
 And dimmed his gift o' sang.
 But judge na' harshly, weigh his sins
 By the standard o' the times—
 No by the higher one which now
 Tries all our deeds an' lines.
 Find no excuse for follies caused
 By Scotia's curse, or lovely woman,
 Condemn a' vice wherever fand,
 But mind, "to err is human."
 A reverence deep had he for Him
 Wha rules the winds an' waves,
 An' ne'er lost faith in Him wha still
 The guilty sinner saves.
 Deep love o' nature filled his mind
 An' fand its vent in sang
 Till cot an' palace, hill an' dale,
 Wi' his sweet measures rang.
 An' wha like him can sing sae weel
 O' love's warm tender flames,
 Which crown our life wi' bliss an' joy
 An' fill wi' peace our hames?
 An' fondly still his lines are read
 Owre a' the earth where Scotchmen dwell,
 An' strangers, too, have owned their worth—
 Have felt their power, and loved them well.
 Tall monuments lift up their heads
 To herald forth his fame;
 An' high in place 'twill aye be fand
 Upon the scroll of fame.
 But 'tis memorial better far
 Than sculptured shafts or storied urns,
 That deep in the world's great living heart
 Is wrote the name of Burns.

XXIV.—A COLLECTION OF BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.

*BY G. A.AITKEN.**FROM THE "GLASGOW HERALD."*

IN 1861, when autograph songs by Robert Burns could be bought for a guinea, and it was, therefore, not worth forging them, a

remarkable collection of eighty Burns manuscripts was sold by Messrs Puttick and Simpson, the well-known auctioneers in London.

The sale was on the 2nd of May, and soon afterwards the portion of the catalogue relating to the Burns papers was privately printed in separate pamphlet form by the compiler, Mr. E. C. Bigmore, under the title, "Descriptive List of a Collection of Original Manuscript Poems by Robert Burns." Twenty-five copies were struck off, and it was only recently that I became aware of the existence of this little book. None of Burns's editors seem to have known it, and, though it is useless to attempt, after so long a time, to trace the papers, which were for the most part bought by London booksellers, an account of them will, I think, be found interesting to admirers of the Poet, and may lead to the present owners of some of the manuscripts making known where they are now to be found. I shall confine my remarks chiefly to pieces which are not to be found in Burns's works, in the hope that the lines given in the catalogue may enable students of old Scotch poetry to identify them, and thus show whether or not it is probable that they were of Burns's own composition. It is, of course, well known that Burns often copied out old verses, and the existence of lines in his writing does not, therefore, in itself afford proof of authorship. The references below are to my edition of Burns's poems published last year by Messrs Bell & Sons.

One of the first pieces mentioned is "The Hue and Cry of John Lewars, a poor man ruined and undone by robbery and murder, being an awful warning to the young men of this age how they look well to themselves in this dangerous, terrible world." This is a complaint, in four four-line verses, of Lewar's heart being stolen by Miss Woods, governess at Miss M'Murdo's boarding-school, and begins, "A thief and a murderer, stop her who can!" From the personages mentioned, there can be little or no doubt that these lines are by Burns, and it would be interesting if they could be recovered. Another piece, obviously Burns's, is "To Captain Gordon, on being asked why I was not to be of the party with him and his brother Kenmure at Syme's," which begins "Dost ask, dear Captain, why from Syme," and, after comparing some of his own abilities (?) with Syme's, concludes (according to the catalogue)—

" Yet must I still the sort deplore
That to my griefs adds one more,
In balking me the social hour
With you and noble Kenmure."

Some such word as "yet" seems to be needed after "adds" in the second line. Next comes "A Sonnet on Sonnets," beginning "Fourteen, a Sonneteer thy praises sings," and ending—

" But brockie played, boo! to bawsie,
And aff gaed the cowte like the win';
Poor Wattie he fell in the cawsie,
And birs'd a' the bones in his skin;
The pistols fell out o' the hulsters,
And were a' bedaubed wi' dirt;
The folk ran about him in clusters,
Some leugh and cry'd, 'lad, are ye hurt?'"

Soon afterwards we find a copy of "The auld man's mare's dead," which is given in Johnson's "Scots Musical Museum," v. 500, without indication of its authorship. It will also be found in Chambers's "Songs of Scotland before Burns," 141. There is, too, a single verse and chorus of "Where hae ye been so braw, lass," which I have not traced elsewhere; and a verse of four lines beginning "When heavy and slow move the dark days of sorrow and care." We find, also, a copy of the ballad, "There lived a man down in yon glen," which is printed by Johnson, iv. 376. A fragment of "Now westlin winds" (Poems, i. 42) is interesting, chiefly because of the variation in the last line; the catalogue states that the "Jeanie Armour" is in short-hand :—

" Now breezy win's and slaughtering guns,
Bright autumn's pleasant weather,
And the muir-cock springs on whirring wings
Amang the blooming heather.
Now waving crops, with yellow tops,
Delight the weary farmer,
An' the moon shines bright when I roam at night
To muse on Jeanie Armour."

" What lucubrations can be made upon it?
Fourteen good measured verses make a sonnet."

Another MS. containing a song, in eight verses, "Here are we, loyal Natives," and two other songs. Another paper had "Broom besoms, a song," beginning "I maun hae a wife, whatsoe'er she be," with three more verses to the same tune. Mr. M'Naught, the editor of the "Burns Chronicle," tells me that he heard verses, of which he remembers only

the following, sung years ago, but that he never saw them in print : whether they form a portion of the same song is uncertain :—

“ Fine broom besoms.
Besoms fine and new,
Besoms for a penny,
Reengers for a plack ;
Gin ye dinna want them
Tie them on my back.”

We then come to a fragment of the “Passion’s Cry” (Poems, Vol. II., pp. 234-6), or “Sappho Rediva,” as Douglas called it, which includes the lines first printed by Dr. Waddell, and ends in accordance with the MS. in the Edinburgh University Library, which I quoted in a note. The next piece which is unfinished, is very different. It consists of 32 lines, descriptive of a fair, and begins “Sae mony braw Jockies and Jennies.” The following lines are quoted :—

“ And Wattie, the muirland laddie,
Was mounted upon a grey cowte,
Wi’ sword at his side like a cadie,
To drive in the sheep and the nowte.
His doubtlet, sae weel did it fit him,
It scarcely cam’ doune to mid-thie ;
Wi’ hair powther’d bonnet and feather,
And housin at curpon and tee.”

A portion (seventeen lines) of a Dedication, beginning “Sir, think not with a mercenary view,” is unpublished. So, too, is an Elegy, “Craigdarroch, fam’d for speaking art,” in four verses, of which the last is as follows :—

“ Go to your Marble Gaffs ! ye Great !
In a’ the tinkler-trash o’ State !
But by the honest turf I’ll wait,
Thou Man of Worth,
And weep the ae best fellow’s fate
E’er lay in earth.”

A version of “Fintry, my stay in worldly strife,” is described as a first sketch, with four unpublished verses ; but they are not quoted, and are probably included in the poem as now published (Poems, II., 322). There were also a draft of the “Monody on a lady famed for her caprice” (III., 169), without the fifth verse, and with many variations from the printed text ; the first five verses of “The Whistle” (II., 294), with variations ; and two versions of the first two verses of “Sing on, sweet songster” (III., 232). In a copy of the “Occasional Address spoken by Miss Fontenelle” (III., 158), the following lines were marked for omission :—

“ ‘O Ma’am,’ replied the silly strutting creature,
Screwing each self-important awkward feature,
‘Flatt’ry I hate, as I admire your taste,
At once so just, correct, profound, and chaste.’ ”

A copy of “The Five Carlins” (II., 305), was sent to Mr. David Blair, gunmaker, Birmingham, with these lines :—“I send you this foolish ballad—I have not yet forgiven Fortune for her mischievous game of cross-purposes that deprived me of the pleasure of seeing you again when you were here. Adieu ! R. BURNS.”

A portion of “The Brigs of Ayr” (beginning “Twas when the stacks got on their winter hap”) is described as containing seven unpublished lines ; and on the fourth page of the MS. was a draft of the dedicatory letter to Ballantyne. The copy of the “Prologue spoken by Mr. Woods” (II., 117), had four lines not printed. A first sketch of “The Jolly Beggars” had “Luckie Nansie” instead of “Poosie Nansie” (I., 157, 120), and the following interesting note by Burns :—“Luckie Nansie is Racer Jess’s mother in my Holy Fair. Luckie kept a kind of caravansery for the lower order of wayfaring strangers and pilgrims.”

In a copy of the first two verses of “No Spartan tribe” (III., 180), “Hibernia” appears instead of “Columbia ;” and the “Prologue spoken at Dumfries, 1790” (II., 310), had two additional lines. In a copy of “The Posie” (III., 32), each verse had as a refrain its last two lines. The song “O wat ye wha that lo’es me” (III., 264), appears without the third verse, and with variations ; and there were only two verses of “She says she lo’es me best of all” (III., 188). The third verse was wanting in “Contented wi’ little, and cantie wi’ mair” (III., 208).

Among the other manuscripts at this sale was Burns’s Common-Place Book, April, 1783, consisting of 43 folio pages ; and “Scotch Poems by Robert Burness,” 59 pages, an autograph collection of very important pieces. Others I have not mentioned because they are to be found in the printed poems ; but the whole catalogue of 24 pages might well be reprinted by one of the Burns clubs, in which case the prices obtained for the MSS. should be added from the copy of the auctioneer’s catalogue in the Newspaper.

Room at the British Museum. We can only wish that Mr. Bigmore had been more liberal of quotation when referring to unpublished lines, and hope that the notice now drawn to

the matter will lead to the discovery and publication of some of the manuscripts dispersed so long ago.

XXV.—BURNS: AN ODE.

BY ALEXANDER ANDERSON.

Read at the unveiling of the Dumfries Statue of the Bard, April 6th, 1882.

The gods had temples, for there is in man
An all-compelling power to shape in stone
His greater, higher brother, to atone
For shame and insult when alone he ran
The thorny pathway, wearing on
His brow an unseen crown
That bore its wearer down
Until he sank and, like a sun, was gone.

And he, our singer, who behind his plough
Walk'd, while song-splendours born in fire
above
Fell down like golden rain upon his brow,
And touch'd his heart to one great bloom
of love ;
Who, lowly, having no high vantage ground,
Half-turn'd him from the plough in humble
guise,
And flung around him that bewitching sound,
As if from larks unseen within the skies,
Until its music, like a living thing,
Grew wing'd, and with a universal coil
Took in its folds the hearts of peer and king,
Yet led in unresisting triumph toil
Until its rugged sons rose up, and said :—
“ He speaks for all, but seems for us, alone :
We bless the singer ; lay hands upon his head,
Who shapes this music which we claim our
own.”

His was the fight with glooms and wild
despairs,
The civil war within which none may see ;
The fading hopes, the daily growing cares,
The forward look into the dim to Be.
Ah me, we did him slow and willing wrong,
Because we knew him not. And now,
When death and Fame around his
brow
Have woven, what our eyes may see,
The wreath of immortality,

We know him ; and though all too late,
With hearts compassionate,
We give the ages as they roll along
This statue of our greatest King of Song.

Ours is the shame of passing by
This singer with the flashing eye,
Whose grand quick soul that beat within his
breast
True to high aims, but as the needle shakes
To many points, so his in that unrest
Which coils itself around great minds, and
takes

The edge from high endeavours till they sink
Like angels, driven from serener air,
Fell, but in falling stood upon the brink
With light that made a nimbus of despair,
Which glowing round his laurel'd head
Made sunshine for his downward tread,
As, with the swan-song on his lips,
He pass'd into the last eclipse,
Leaving his great full heart behind,
To throb for ever with his kind.

Nay, but we did his high great spirit wrong.
He cannot feel it ; for he sees aright
In that grand burst of other world light
That now has made the weak within him
strong.

He hears the voice of Dante rise
In ever higher harmonies ;
And Shakespeare making in high bliss
Another summer where he is ;
Milton with unseal'd vision calm
Amid his own grand organ psalm ;
And Homer sending one wild roll
And clash of battle through the whole.

They hear him, and he hears them, too,
For pain and suffering in song
Is brotherhood among the strong,
And links with bands of steel the few.

They bend and whisper (for they know
 In that high land all tongues of speech)
 "Here is a brother down below
 Who almost stands within our reach.
 What though our ear can catch a note
 That jars the else perfect melody,
 It is some string the world has smote
 As heedlessly it thunder'd by.
 Ours be the task to heal and place
 This brother with his singing race."
 Ours is the shame of having done him wrong ;
 He suffer'd and went down,
 Yet stumbling, caught the crown :
 His is the glory, ours his endless song.

Ah, could we reach him where he stands
 In that clear, pitying light of death ;
 Nay, touch him with our reverent hands,
 And whisper with a faltering breath
 The praise of all who felt his song
 Bring tears or strike and make them strong.
 Of one* who tower'd above the rest,
 (Alas the earth is on his breast) ;
 He came from lone, grey wilds, from which
 He tore the fashion of his speech,
 Bearing upon his lips like John
 A burning gospel of his own,
 And brought to nineteenth century men
 A message from the wilds again.
 He, pausing in the battle's din,
 And with a softer light within
 The misty dreamland of his eye
 Paid worship to thy melody.
 O think of praise from him, and bless
 The gift of heaven that brought thee this !
 Vain dream ! we mortals cry in vain
 To the Immortals, though we feel
 The pain they felt, they still remain
 Serene in that high world of theirs,
 And will not hearken to our prayers,
 Nor for a moment will reveal
 To daily deafen'd mortal ear
 One echo of the sounds they hear.

His is the glory, ours his endless song,
 For he has flung a light on wood and field
 Which doth not to the daily sky belong,
 Nor anything this earth of ours can yield.
 It mingleth with each breath of air
 That sways the leaves by " Bonnie Doon,"

* Thomas Carlyle.

It makes more bright the summer there,
 And adds a glory to its June.
 Ayr takes a music—not its own—
 And sings through woods and fields that
 smile,

Then sighs, and takes a sweeter tone
 Within the haunts of Ballochmyle.
 A greener glory crowns the grass
 That waves to-day around Mossiel,
 For there his footsteps once did pass
 And now for ever seem to feel
 The touch that made them sacred. There
 The certain sense of song has stirr'd
 And, glowing through the sweeter air,
 Can only be in silence heard.
 Nith takes a higher gleam, and glides
 Through waving meadows sweet to see ;
 And Afton adds its mimic tides
 To swell that spirit melody,
 Until the fair Queen of the South
 Reclining 'mid her wood and hill
 Receives from her dead Master's mouth
 Those tones that wake and tremble still
 In songs that take no touch of gloom,
 Though almost sung within the tomb.
 For who can hear and say he marks
 A threnody within the lark's ?
 And his, the Master's, as he sung
 Amid the falling shades were flung
 As light as thistle-down to bear
 Their music through the gracious air,
 The while he felt his failing breath
 Grow short beneath the shaft of death.

What is it that transforms each spot
 Where once the master's footsteps trod
 Into the temple of a god
 Still burning with his life and thought ?
 We know not ; we can only guess
 That down from other, purer skys,
 Has come in silent solemnness
 The haunting sense that deifies.
 We know not what it is so sweet and fair
 We only know that it is there.

Away, then, with those clouds that crown
 The stony forehead of the town.
 We see them not—the light he shed
 Has made a sunshine overhead
 That tips with gold the darkness where
 What we had thought was grim dispair

Is but the mantle of his song,
 His singing raiment, folded wrong.
 We see him only in that light
 When all men seem to look aright,
 We see him thus, and, as we look,
 We turn away and cannot brook
 The splendour, and the light which streams
 As from a summer noonday's beams
 From that high brow and glowing eye
 Whose depths is liquid melody.
 We turn away and only hear
 The world's loud whisper fill our ear,
 Which may perchance rise unto him
 In that high land where earth grows dim,
 And where those echoes which are ours
 Can only touch with wasted powers
 The shores of that eternity
 Where all our choicest singers be.
 Will he too hear them? Idle thought.
 We ask, but we can answer not.
 We only know the world to-day
 Has flung its downward look away,
 And at the magic of his name
 Has risen with million-tongued acclaim
 To press its toiling brow against the feet
 Of him who sang, and singing sang so sweet,
 Left unto this and all the coming years,
 A legacy of smiles and tears.

Queen of the South, who hast our Singer's
 dust
 Beneath that dome where, by the plough, he
 stands,
 The Muse above him with the laurel wreath
 Forever crowning him—another trust
 Is given thee to-day, for lo, between
 The Poet and his Song the sculptor stands
 Moulding with loving hand and reverent
 touch

The shape of him in marble. Meet it is
 That this last tribute to our singing King
 Should come from her who, having in her
 heart
 That large perfection for his witching song
 Yet, being woman, sees him as we do,
 Without one hint to darken with a spot
 The fame that circles him. Not thine to
 mourn
 Like that fair Florence by the Arno where
 Italia, like a childless mother, weeps
 Above the dust of all her mightiest sons,
 But not her greatest singer. Though he
 stands,
 Before and in that Santa Croce still,
 Sublimely simple and severely stern,
 A narrow wreath about his brow, and at
 His feet the eagle of his cleaving song,
 He sleeps, the world's lone Dante far away,
 And Florence cannot gather to her heart
 The ashes of her exiled son. But thou
 Who hast the dust of him we crown to-day
 Rejoice, and guard amid the streets, where
 once
 He trod, crown'd with the laurel, and beneath
 Its folds the cypress wreath of early death,
 This shape of him we love. The coming
 years,
 First waves in all the centuries to be,
 Can bring to thee no greater fame than this:
 The dust thou claspest to thy breast, that
 dust
 Once throbbing with such fiery life, and this,
 Wrought by the touch of woman's tender
 hands
 Into the breathless marble of himself.
 To stand forever and to be to all
 The fair white Memnon of our country's
 Song.

XXVI.—BURNS AND BLAIR : WITH A NOTE ON BEATTIE.

THE name of Robert Blair is associated in English literary history with a gloomy and powerful poem, "The Grave," which had an immense popularity, especially in Scotland, all through the latter half of last century. It was hardly eclipsed even by Young's "Night Thoughts"—if one may speak of gloom eclipsing gloom. Southeby referred to it as

the most meritorious of all poems written in imitation of the "Night Thoughts;" but Southeby does injustice to the genius of Blair, for "The Grave" was composed before the publication of Young's gloomy masterpiece, though it was not printed till 1743. It was written before its author's appointment as minister to the parish of Athelstaneford, in

Haddingtonshire, and when Blair was still a young man between twenty and thirty. A well-known line of Campbell's—"Like angels' visits, few and far between"—it may not be generally known, was lifted from Blair, who refers to good impulses returning in an evil life "in visits like those of angels, short and far between." But a greater than Campbell was indebted, and indebted to a greater extent, for both turn of phrase and general tenor of reflection, to the author of "The Grave." Burns was a close and earnest student of this powerfully suggestive poem. Both his correspondence and his poems bear the clearest evidence, direct and indirect. The passage—

Tell us, ye dead ! will none of you in pity
To those you left behind disclose the secret ?
Oh, that some courteous ghost would blab it out,
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be ?

must have been often on his lips, and was often transcribed by his pen. As well known to him, and as often quoted, was another passage from "The Grave" of some thirty lines, commencing—

Friendship ! mysterious cement of the soul !
Sweetness of life, and solder of society !
I owe thee much : thou hast deserved of me
Far far beyond what I can ever pay.

But the greatest honour that can be attributed to the passage lies in the undoubted fact that, along with a scarcely remembered lyric of Thomson's, it suggested much of the imagery and sentiment of Burns's unutterably rich and tender hymns on Highland Mary. Elair represents himself and his "friend" as "wandering heedless on" in the ample security of a thick wood; the lovers rest on a flowery bank beside a stream that murmurs sweetly through the underwood; the thrush in their hearing renews and "mends his song of love;" the fragrance of wild rose and eglantine exhales around them—

O, then the longest summer's day
Seemed too too much in haste ; still the full heart
Had not imparted half.

"To Mary in Heaven," like the companion verses on "Highland Mary," contains the same imagery of woodland and water, birds and flowers, the same situation of lovers fain, the same sentiments of affection, the same

sad reflections afterwards to be noted. The lovers meet by the winding Ayr that gurgled and kissed its pebbly shore, half-hidden in an underwood of birch and blooming thorn—

The flowers sprang wanton to be press'd,
The birds sang love on every spray :
Till too too soon the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of wing'd day.

To both poets their memories are for ever sad and for ever sacred by reason of the death of the loved one. Blair's reflections are thus expressed—

Dull Grave ! thou spoil'st the dance of youthful blood,
Strik'st out the dimple from the cheek of mirth,
And every feature from the face.

The beloved dead is "dumb as the green-covering turf." Far more tenderly uttered is the sorrow of Burns—

O pale, pale now those rosy lips
I aft ha'e kiss'd sae fondly,
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly. . . .
Now green's the sod and cauld the clay
That wraps my Highland Mary.

At least one other bit from this fruitful passage in "The Grave" of Blair reappears in the familiar poetry of Burns. In the plaintive flow of "Banks an' Braes o' Bonnie Doon" the maiden all forlorn sings sadly—

Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

The expression may, of course, be a mere coincidence, but is more probably a recollection of the words of Blair—

Of joys departed
Not to return, how painful the remembrance !

Other traces of Burns's study of Blair are in all likelihood discoverable in the following parallel passages :—

He whistled up Lord Lennox' march
To keep his courage cheery.—(*Hallowe'en.*)

This is said of "fechtin' Jamie Fleck" when he boldly went forth into the darkness to sow his hempseed. Blair had already pictured the school-boy as he passed "the lone churchyard"—

Whistling aloud to bear his courage up.

Again, in "The Petition of Bruar Water," a noble poem framed on the lines of Ramsay's

"Salutation of Edinburgh to the Marquis of Carnarvon," Burns describes the harvest moon as making a moving check-work with the trembling twigs and leaves of "lofty firs, and ashes cool," and "fragrant barks in wood-bines drest;" he has a visionary glimpse of—

The reaper's nightly beam
Mild-chequering thro' the trees.

The same peculiar expression occurs in Blair, of—

Moonshine ehequering thro' the trees.

Everybody remembers the line, which prepares us for the revelry of Tam o' Shanter and Soutar Johnnie ; it is—

When drouthie neibors neibors meet.

Blair hints at a similar orgy, if the word may be allowed, with a grave-digger for Thaliarch—only his expression is less euphemistic ; it is—

When drunkards meet.

It was to a different Blair—"damnation" Blair, as he has been irreverently called—that Burns was indebted for a notably felicitous alteration of his text—

Moodie speeds the holy door
Wi' tidings of salvation.—*Holy Fair.*

In modern editions of the minor poets the verses of Beattie are usually bound up with those of Blair. Beattie figured so prominently in both prose and rhyme in the heyday of his reputation as rather to astonish us now. "The Minstrel" first appeared in 1771, and from that year till about 1775 its singularly fortunate author was one of the lions of his time, patronised on all hands, and encouraged to roar, by Royalty, the Church, and the literary profession. It was impossible that Burns should be ignorant of him, or fail to peruse him. But Beattie seems to have had little influence upon either the thought or the language of Burns. He was no doubt, though in a small degree, indebted to him—as already shown—for the criticism of Shenstone and Gray which occurs in "The Vision :"—

Thou canst not learn nor can I show . . .
To wake the bosom-melting throe
With Shenstone's art,
Or pour with Gray the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

Beattie's opinion of those poets will be found in a somewhat bitter and uncharitable poem "on the report of a monument to be erected in Westminster Abbey in memory of a late author," which he had the good taste to reject from later editions of his poems. The author referred to was Churchill, satirised as Bufo. In the course of the satire he makes mention of "Gray's unlaboured art soothing, melting, and ravishing the heart ;" of the Elegy written in a Country Churchyard, "flowing in simple majesty of manly woe ;" and of the amiability and grace of Shenstone's character as a poet. If there is no trace of Beattie's influence in the lines quoted from "The Vision," there is no trace of it anywhere else in the work of Burns. There are, however, several references which go to show Burns's admiring acquaintanceship with his writings and his reputation. And, indeed, without their evidence, it is past doubt that Burns must have had no mean regard for one who could turn in his own favourite measure so graceful a stanza as—

Oh, bonnie are the greensward howes,
Where thro' the birks the burnie rows,
And the bee bums, and the ox lows,
And saft winds rustle,
And shepherd lads on sunny knowes
Blaw the blithe whistle.

The stanza is from a rhyming epistle to Ross of Lochee, the author of "The Fortunate Shepherdess"—a pastoral drama which has done for Scotland north of the Tay what Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd" has done for the Lowlands ; and it is part of an effort, in the vernacular (of Aberdeen), which approves the capability of Beattie to produce such a poem as that "On Pastoral Poetry" which one diffidently attributes to Burns.

Probably the most convincing proof of Burns's admiration for Beattie is expressed in his letter, of date January 1787, to "Zeluco" Moore—"In a language where Thomson and Beattie have painted the landscape . . . I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame." Thomson's ability to paint the landscape will be universally allowed, but Beattie's will be questioned—because it is not so generally known. Which of his descriptions of natural scenery may have been in the mind of Burns when he elevated

him to the level of Thomson, it is of course impossible to say definitely, but an examination of "The Minstrel" will reveal several impressive scenes informed with the graceful spirit which pervades the reposeful passages of Campbell's "Wyoming," and which may well have enraptured the responsive heart of Burns. The student who is curious in such matters will find favourable specimens of "Beattie's wark" in stanzas xxxviii. and xxxix. of the First Book, and stanza viii. of the Second Book of "The Minstrel." The last-mentioned stanza is distinctly echoed in the well-known "flamingo" stanza of "Gertrude of Wyoming." A better specimen of Beattie's descriptive art occurs in the opening passage of his once widely known, now clean forgotten, "Hermit." But perhaps he attains his highest pitch as a descriptive poet in an obscure poem, written in his twenty-fourth year; here we have such picturesque touches, such suggestive melodies as—

What time the wan moon's yellow horn
Gleams on the western deep;

and—

Be mine the hollow cliff, whose pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream—
Whence the sacred owl on pinions gray
Breaks from the rustling boughs,
And down the lone vale sails away
To more profound repose.

In January, 1787, Burns sent, by way of New Year's gift, a copy of the Poems of Beattie to a certain Miss Logan, residing with her brother and mother at Park Villa, near Ayr. The brother, well known to us as

"thairm-inspiring Willie," from his accomplishments as a virtuoso on the violin, was a retired military officer holding the rank of major; and the sister was "Sentimental Sister Susie" of the poet's "Epistle to Major Logan." The copy of Beattie was accompanied with the lines:—

I send you more than India boasts
In Edwin's simple tale,

along with the sentiment—"and may, dear maid, each lover prove an Edwin still to you!"

Perhaps the only other reference to Beattie in the works of Burns are those of the delightfully frank "First Epistle to Lapraik":—

Thought I, can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"

and of "The Ordination":—

Common-sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to Jamie Beattie
Her 'plain't this day.

The appositeness of the latter allusion is in the fact that Beattie's "Essay on Truth"—a blast impotently intended to sweep David Hume's philosophy behind the horizon—revealed him as one of the "Moderate" party in the clerical dissensions of the time. Sir Joshua had painted Beattie as a champion aiding an angel in strife with Scepticism, Folly, and Prejudice. His "Essay on Truth" brought him the compliment from Reynolds. But nowadays one only remembers the "Essay" because it explains the picture and illustrates the reference in Burns.

XXVII.—THE HOMES AND HOME LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

BY PROF. LEWIS STUART.

BURNS is the poet laureate of Scotland, the song laureate of the world. Of a susceptible temperament, he was greatly influenced by surroundings. These affected his character as well as his modes of thought and expression. The homes and home life were important factors in the product we call *the poet Burns*. Four houses in Ayrshire and three in Dumfries-shire are famous as the "homes of Burns." The four in Ayrshire are,—the little cottage in which he was born, Mount

Olyphant, Lochlea, and Mossgiel; the three in Dumfries-shire are,—Ellisland, six miles from the town of Dumfries, the second story on the north side of the Wee Vennel (now Bank street) and the house on Mill-hole Brae (now Burns street), in which he died.

The house in which Robert Burns was born January 25, 1759, is in the parish of Ayr, on the roadside, two miles south of

"Auld Ayr wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men or bonnie lassies."

It is a "clay biggin'" whitewashed, roofed with thatch or straw, and was built by the poet's father. The two apartments, "but and ben," were a kitchen in one end and a room in the other. The kitchen, which was the family room, had a concealed bed, a fireplace and a chimney, all of interest to the curious pilgrim. The furniture was suited to the house, for service not for ornament. Everything was neat and tidy. The mode of living was that usual among the cotters and small farmers of Scotland. It is the same to-day. The "halesome parritch" and other preparations of oatmeal—as brose or hasty pudding, kailbrose, oatmeal cake—were the staple diet. To this add plenty of milk, occasionally butter and cheese :

"The dame brings forth in complimentary mood
To grace the lad, her *well-hain'd kebbuck*."

Eggs are a luxury ; on state occasions a chicken "crowns the board."

The poet's father, William Burns, was at this time gardener to William Ferguson of Doonholm, and his mother managed her own little dairy of two and sometimes three cows. Both parents were frugal, industrious, and religious. Stories of gypsies, witches, warlocks, and the like were often heard in the poet's early years and greatly influenced his imagination. "In my infant and boyish days, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, deadlights, wraiths, apparitions, cantrails, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry."

One incident of his earliest home merits repetition. One stormy morning, when he was only a few days old, a part of the gable of the house fell out, and

"A blast o' Januar' win'
Blew *hansel* in on Robin."

Mother and child had to be carried through the storm to a neighbour's house. Burns referring to this in after years would say, "No wonder that one ushered into the world in such a tempest should be the victim of stormy passions."

This strong sense of nature's sympathy is the very essence of the lyric mode. No poet ever expressed this sympathy better. Take as illustration, "Aston Water," where nature's sympathy is invoked, or "The Lass o' Ballochmyle," where his "heart rejoiced in nature's joy."

See, too, how the depths of pathos are touched when nature refuses her sympathy, in "Bonnie Doon" or "My Nannie's Awa."

In the little house above described, the Burns family lived till Whitsuntide, 1766, when they moved to Mount Oliphant. Mr. Ferguson had a high opinion of his gardener, and with a view to giving him a chance to improve his fortune, leased to him the farm of Mount Oliphant, also in the parish of Ayr, two miles south-east. This change enabled the father to keep his children at home. The farm consisted of seventy acres and had good buildings on it. The soil, however, was poor and misfortunes plenty. Hard work and the most rigid economy failed. Though "all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their ability, and rather beyond it," and though "for several years butcher's meat was a stranger in the house, it was of no avail." At thirteen, Burns did a man's work, and at fifteen was the chief labourer on the farm. There were no companions of his own age or near it in the neighbourhood. Few visitors were seen. The family lead an isolated life. The poet in his autobiography says of the life at Mount Oliphant, "The cheerless gloom of a hermit with the increasing toil of a galley slave brought me to my sixteenth year." Hard and monotonous as this life was, it was not without great influence on our poet's life. The distance from school made his attendance irregular, but the work of education was carried forward by his father. When ten or eleven, he says, "I was a fair English scholar, a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles." The other branches of what we call "a common school education" were also acquired in the evenings. In the summer of 1772, he attended week about with his brother Gilbert, the parish school of Dalrymple, to improve his penmanship, and during the following year spent three weeks in Ayr, reviewing English grammar and acquiring a smattering of French.

In the autumn of the next year (1774) Burns made his first essay in love and poetry. The heroine was his partner in the harvest field, Nellie Kilpatrick, daughter of the blacksmith, and his first poem was composed to the tune of this "bonnie, sweet, *sonsie*" [pleasant-appearing] lass's favourite reel. The first stanza is,

"O once I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Aye, and I love her still ;
And whilst that virtue warms my heart,
I'll love my handsome Nell."

We give also the fifth stanza, which Principal Shairp says "for directness of feeling and felicity of language, he [Burns] hardly ever surpassed":

"She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Baith decent and genteel,
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel."

He spent his seventeenth summer (1776) at Kirkoswald studying surveying. He made good progress in his studies, but learned also "to fill his glass and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble." Here, too, he met the second of his poetical heroines, Peggy Thomson, whose charms "overset my trigonometry and sent me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies." On his return from Kirkoswald, Burns went to a dancing school "to give his manners a brush." This he did "in absolute defiance of his father's commands."

For a couple of years before leaving Mount Oliphant, the affairs of the Burns family were in a sorry plight. Mr. Ferguson, who had always been a generous landlord, died. The factor who managed the estate was exacting and severe. Burns has given us a character portrait of him in "The Twa Dogs," and in his letter to Dr. Moore (1787) says, "my indignation yet boils at the threatening, insolent epistles from that Scoundrel Tyrant, which used to set us all in tears." Relief came with the expiration of the lease. The family moved to the farm of Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, Whitsuntide, 1777.

This farm consisted of one hundred and thirty acres on the north bank of the river Ayr, and had a fine outlook. The family remained here seven years. For some time life passed more pleasantly. Our poet had thirty-five dollars a year as wages and some land to raise flax on his own account. He

founded the "Bachelors' Club," which had originally a membership of seven. It met once a month in the Tarbolton Tavern. The sum to be expended by each member at any one meeting was not to exceed three pence (six cents). The first four years of the Lochlea period were probably the happiest of Burn's life, at no time very happy. They close with the story of his first serious *affair du cœur*. He was deeply smitten by the charms of Ellison Bebbie, daughter of a small farmer at Galston, servant in a family on Cessnock Water, some two miles from Lochlea. Ellison was not a beauty, but had the greater charm of "unusual liveliness and grace of mind." His suit was rejected. Neither love songs nor love letters could move her.

Shortly after this rejection, Burns went to Irvine to learn flax-dressing.* Here he entered into business as a manufacturer and retailer of flax. His partner fleeced him. Burns calls him "a scoundrel of the first water, who made money by the mystery of thieving." Here is a fitting finale to this episode in Burns's life:—"While we were giving a welcoming carousal to the New Year, our shop, by the drunken carelessness of my partner's wife, took fire and was burned to ashes, and left me, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence." During his stay in Irvine, too, he met a young fellow of good education and good parts but bad morals, who "spoke of illicit love with levity, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief." On returning to Lochlea in the spring of 1782, Burns found his father on his deathbed and the affairs of the family in utter ruin. Death saved the good man from the debtor's prison, February 13, 1784.

William Burns was a kind, wise, and affectionate father, leading rather than driving his children in the ways of virtue. He seldom found fault, almost never resorted to the severer discipline so common in Scotland in his day. He carefully practised every known duty, teaching by example as well as precept.

* Though Burns had no home in Kirkoswald, Irvine, or later in Edinburgh, it is necessary to introduce these episodes, to account for the seeming failure of the home influences.—L. S.

His character portrait in "The Cotter's Saturday Night" is an immortal monument to the "saint, the father, and the husband."

The month after his death, the family moved to Mossgiel, parish of Mauchline. The new home of the Burns family was only two or three miles from Lochlea. The house was a "but-and-ben" and a garret reached by a trap stair. The country round Mauchline is beautiful. The scenery along the river Ayr can scarcely be surpassed for that restful quality so dear to the heart of poet and painter. The farms tenanted by the Burns family had all of them more of beauty than fertility. This one contained one hundred and eighteen acres of cold clay soil. The money necessary to stock it was obtained by the members of the family ranking with their father's creditors for arrears of wages. Gavin Hamilton, a lawyer in Mauchline, was their landlord. Misfortune still dogged the family. The first year, from bad seed, the second, from a late harvest, half the crops was lost. This upset the fine resolutions with which our bard entered on this enterprise.

In April or May following the removal to Mossgiel, Burns began his acquaintance with "Bonnie Jean,"—Jean Armour—an event which affected all his future life, imparting to it its brightest lights and its darkest shadows. The two years and a half between the arrival at Mossgiel and at Edinburgh revealed Burns's genius as a poet and his weakness as a man. Amid the drudgery of the farm life and its failures, Burns sought distraction in poetry.

"It's aye a treasure
My chief, amait my only pleasure."

He wrote in rapid succession most of his very best poetry during this period, and on July 30th 1786, appeared the famous Kilmarnock edition of his poems. This proclaimed his genius to the world. In the spring of that same year he had married Jean Armour. The marriage was secret and irregular. Burns, however, gave a written acknowledgement of it, thus legalizing it according to Scottish law. When Jean's father found out how matters were he was wroth. He insisted that his daughter should destroy the evidence of her marriage and have nothing further to do with Burns. He then instituted legal proceedings

against him. Burns terrified as well as disgraced gave up his share of the farm to his brother, retired into hiding, and made arrangements to go to Jamaica to avoid the consequences of his folly. This part of the Armour episode does small credit either to the virtue or the courage of Burns. The Highland Mary episode belongs here too, an episode within an episode. Taken together, they well illustrate the strange contradictions in Burns's life and writings,—the generosity and selfishness, the noble reaches of aspiration, and the grossness, the greatness, and the littleness of Burns—contradictions only to be accounted for on the hypothesis of an intense, emotional nature, sensitive as intense.

To get money to pay his passage to Jamaica, he was persuaded by Gavin Hamilton and other friends to publish his poems, did so, and from the venture realized one hundred dollars. Of this he spent forty-seven for a passage and was on his way to Greenock to embark when the report of a letter written by Dr. Thomas Blacklock, the blind poet of Edinburgh, and the success of the Kilmarnock edition, turned his attention and his footsteps toward the capital.

Burns reached Edinburgh November 28, 1786. He almost immediately became the lion of the season. The Earl of Glencairn, the Duchess of Gordon, Lord Monboddo, Dugald Stewart, Hugh Blair, Adam Smith, Harry Erskine, the *crème de la crème* of Edinburgh society, received him with enthusiasm and welcomed him as a prodigy. The ploughman of yesterday bore himself well in this aristocratic company. His perfect self-possession, surprising powers of conversation, and courtesy of deportment astonished them. He was introduced to Wm. Creece, the leading publisher of the city, by Glencairn. The Caledonian Hunt subscribed for one hundred copies of a new edition of his works. Several noblemen and gentlemen of means subscribed liberally—one for forty-two copies, a second for forty, a third for twenty. The next summer Burns made a tour through the south of Scotland, a visit to his Ayrshire home, and a trip into the Highlands. Everywhere he was received with cordiality and éclat. He received the freedom of the city at Dumfries, was entertained as an honoured guest by the

Duke of Athole at Blair Athole, and at Fochabers by the Duke and Duchess of Gordon. He returned to Edinburgh in October.

The second winter in the capital, however, was very different. He no longer was lionized. His aristocratic friends gave him the cold shoulder. Only the orgies of the Crochallan Club were left of the festivities of Scotland's capital, but he consoled himself as best he could with the thought of an "independence at the plough tail," to which he could withdraw. Even during the gay and brilliant life of his first winter in Edinburgh he reveals in his "Commonplace Book" a heart flooded with the bitterness of Marah. What wonder that after the slights to which he was exposed in this second season he was glad to shake from his feet the dust of the gay capital and to return to the quiet of the country. In February, 1788, he had a settlement with his publisher, Creech, and the following month left Edinburgh richer in money by £2,000 or £3,000, richer in experience, richer in reputation, but not richer in character. In April of this same year he was privately married to "bonnie Jean," and in June went to his farm in Ellisland.

Ellisland is about six miles from the town of Dumfries, on the bank of the Nith. The location is a lovely one and the outlook beautiful. Burns was told that he made a poet's not a farmer's choice when he selected it. The charm of the river and the fine view of rich holms and noble woods with their background of the "many-hued" hills prevailed. The farm had a hundred acres. There were no buildings on it. Burns had to build these for himself. On laying the foundation of his house, it is said he reverently uncovered his head and invoked God's blessing. Not till December did he bring his wife and family to Ellisland, and it was about six months after this before they went to live in their own house. When it was ready Burns had his servant girl take a bowl of salt with the family Bible on the top of it and go into the house to possess it, he and his wife following her arm in arm. Then followed the house warming. The house was a simple "but, and ben" with a garret. It is only a few yards from the river. A short distance from

the house is the kitchen garden, and near the house is a fine spring of sweet water. This is the first home that Burns ever called his own. Here he raised the family altar, gathering his household at eventide for family worship, which he conducted himself. He attended church regularly. He gave himself with earnestness to his farm work and seemed determined on a new and better life. Though on first coming to Ellisland he wrote "for all the pleasurable part of life called social communication I am at the very elbow of existence," this was not so very long. His reputation as a poet soon brought him many callers, and his hospitable nature and convivial habits allowed these to interfere with his work.

In the second summer of his stay in Ellisland (1789), he received appointment as exciseman or gauger. This had been promised him before he left Edinburgh. From this time on he performed the duties of this office with diligence but never with satisfaction. The work required interfered with his success as a farmer, called him much from home, and led him into company and temptations which greatly hastened his death. Welcome everywhere and with the welcome always the bottle, he drank both deep and often. In a little over three years from his arrival at Ellisland, he had to dispose of his stock, surrender his lease, and move to Dumfries. Ichabod, the glory is departed. The possibilities of Ellisland were great and the prospect of his life there, judged by the first year was good. In Ellisland, if anywhere, the poet might have found happiness and fulfilled his mission nobly. Here he experienced and might have continued to experience what he calls, and justly so, the "true pathos and sublime of human life" by making

"A happy fireside clime
For weans and wife."

But the lessons learned at Kirkoswald and Irvine and Edinburgh could not be forgotten.

In November, 1791, Burns moved into Dumfries. He occupied for a year and a half three rooms of a second floor on the north side of the Wee Vennel (now Bank Street). All the rooms were small. The central one, used as a study, was very small; it was a bed closet rather than a room. The ground floor was the stamp office, and the third story was

occupied by an "honest blacksmith." Almost directly across the street lived Captain Hamilton, his landlord. The captain was well off, a friend and admirer of the poet. This friendship and admiration he would occasionally show by asking Burns to a Sunday dinner. Burns had many friends among the county families, but the life of the poet in Dumfries was not a happy one. Much of his time when not engaged in performing the duties of his office, was consumed at the Globe Tavern and similar resorts. He was of course the oracle of the company always. Visitors from a distance, and the few country gentlemen who still kept up acquaintance with him, were wont to send for Burns to join them in their potations, and he was always ready to accommodate them. It was sport for them but death to him. He had crossed swords with the giants of the Scottish capital, he had quaffed bumpers from the enchanting cup of popular applause, and the little home in the Wee Vennel with the contrast of what he had been and what he might have been then, drove him too often to drown his care and remorse with boon companions. He performed his duties with fidelity and success. As he neared his death, like the fabled swan, he poured forth a flood of wondrous song.

At Whitsuntide, 1793, he moved from the Wee Vennel into a better house in the Mill-hole Brae (now Burns street). This was a cottage with two floors and an attic. The lower floor contained a kitchen and a good-sized parlour; the second floor two rooms of unequal size, in the smaller one of which the poet breathed his last. The attic had two bedrooms in which the children slept, and between these a closet nine feet square used by Burns as a study.

His mode of life was unchanged. His hopes of promotion were doomed to disappointment. The bitterness of life became more intense. He still carried on a large correspondence, and wrote his wonderous songs. He might occasionally be seen helping his children to learn their lessons or reading poetry with them. Mr. Gray, their teacher in Dumfries, affirms that no parent he knew watched more carefully over his children's education, and that the benefit of the father's instructions was apparent in the excellence of his son's daily school work. The end was fast approaching. His last illness lasted from October, 1795. Premature old age had come. Death was hastened by a severe cold caught in the following January. Returning late from the Globe Tavern, he sank down in the deep snow overcome by drowsiness and the liquor he had taken, and there slept for some hours. From the cold thus caught he never fully recovered. On July 4 he tried sea bathing at Brow. On the 18th of the same month he returned to Dumfries; on the 21st he passed away, only thirty-seven, worn out.

Great is the purifying power of death, especially where the essential nature is noble and generous. The stains on the 'scutcheon of Burns, made by passion and excess, though they cannot be wholly effaced, are seen but dimly under the laurel wreath. The influences of Burns's homes and home life were helpful to him in many ways. To them are due what little happiness he enjoyed. To them are due all that is best in his life and writings. For them everyone is grateful who loves sincerely the world's greatest song writer and Scotland's greatest poet, Robert Burns.

XXVIII.—BURNS AND THE ARDWALL FAMILY.

THE death of Mr. Walter M'Culloch of Ardwall recalled the friendly part which his uncle played towards Robert Burns, at a time when differences of political sentiment had caused the poet to be cold-shouldered by the fashionable circle who had courted his society for a season. The occasion was the day of the grand county ball held in 1794, on the 4th of

June, in honour of the birth-day of "great George, our King." These annual gatherings were held at that time in the old Assembly Rooms in Irish Street, at the foot of the George Inn Close, subsequently occupied as a school by the late Mr. Gemmell. The incident is thus narrated by Mr. J. G. Lockhart:

Mr. David Macculloch, a son of the Laird of Ardwell, has told me that he was seldom more grieved than when, riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening, to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite part was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognise him. The horseman dismounted and joined Burns, who, on his proposing to him to cross the street, said, "Nay, nay, my young friend—that's all over now ;" and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad—

" His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow
His auld aye look'd better than mony aye's new ;
But now he lets' wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himself dowie upon the corn-bing.

Oh were we young, as we ance hae been,
We suld hae been galloping doune yon green,
And linking it ower the lily-white lea—
And werenae my heart light I wad die."

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He immediately, after citing these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner ; and, taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably until the hour of the ball arrived, with a bowl of his usual potion, and bonnie Jean's singing of some verses which he had recently composed.

About a fortnight later Burns addressed to his friend M'Culloch the following familiar epistle :

Dumfries, 21st June, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,—My long projected journey through your country is at last fixed ; and on Wednesday next, if you have nothing of more importance to do, take a saunter down to Gatehouse about two or three o'clock ; I will be happy to take a draught of M'Kune's best with you. Collector Syme will be at Glens about that time, and will meet us about dish-of-tea hour. Syme goes also to Kerroughtrie, and let me remind you of your kind promises to accompany me there ; I will need all the friends I can muster, for I am indeed ill at ease whenever I approach your honourables and right honourables.

The laird of Kirroughtrie, of whom the writer professes to stand thus in awe, was Mr. Patrick Heron, in whose interest as Whig candidate for the Stewartry in the following year Burns wrote several ballads, and on whose side he promised, in a prose epistle, "to muster all the votaries of honest laughter and fair, candid ridicule."

Mr. Lockhart is not strictly accurate when he designates Mr. David M'Culloch as "a son of the 'Laird of Ardwell.'" His father, also named David, had died in 1793, and at the time of the Dumfries meeting with Burns the estate was in possession of his elder brother, Edward. It passed to another brother, James Murray M'Culloch, the father of the lately deceased proprietor, in 1796, on the accidental death of Edward, who was thrown from his horse near Kirkcudbright. David, the friend of Burns, survived until 1825, when he died at Cheltenham.

XXIX.—BONNIE JEAN.

BY GEORGE DOBIE.

WE'LL sing the nicht Jean Armour's praise,
She's worthy o' a sang,
For it was Burns, her ain guidman,
That raised her 'bin the thrang.
While bleechin' claes on Mauchline Braes,
By Rab she first was seen,
Where Cupid's darts pierced baith the hearts
O' Burns and bonnie Jean.

Jean was the jewel o' his heart,
The apple o' his e'e,
And little kent that country maid
That she a queen wad be.
For to us lang she'll reign in sang.
And gain oor high esteem ;
She prov'd through life a faithfu' wife,
Our peet's bonnie Jean.

To Burns, Jean was the sweetest lass
That ever graced the West,
Nae ither belle could her surpass,
She was to him the best.
The westlin' win's will cease to blaw,
And gowans deck the green,
Before it ever fades awa'
The name o' bonnie Jean.

On this, our poet's natal day,
We'll sing to bonnie Jean ;
Had Rab himsel' been here to hear't,
He had been proud, I ween.
For this ance charmin', artless lass,
This peerless village queen,
She'll lang remembered be by us
As Burn's bonnie Jean.

XXX.—“SCOTS WHA HAE.”

How the famous Scotch war song was composed.

IN an interleaved copy of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* there is a note on the fragments of an old song, in the handwriting of Burns, in which the following passage occurs—“Many of our Scots airs have outlived their original, and perhaps many subsequent sets of verses.” It would be difficult to discover any better illustration of this remark than the air to which the poet wrote the memorable words of “Scots wha hae.” It has been known by many names, and in one disguise or another can be traced back at least four hundred years.

The words of its earliest known appearance as a song, “Hey ! Now the Day Dawis,” are not probably the first verses to which the tune was attached. Although the date of the birth of Alexander Montgomerie, the author of the words, is not known, he must have been writing previous to 1568, the date of the Bannatyne Manuscript, as some of his poetry occurs in that collection. But the song by that name was known long before his time. It is mentioned by Gavin Douglas (1512), Bishop of Dunkeld, in the prologue to the thirteenth book of his translation of Virgil, as a favourite song among the vulgar ; while his still older contemporary, Dunbar, alludes to it in one of his poems, in which he laughs at certain minstrels of Edinburgh for having only two tunes—

Your commone menstrualis has no tune
But “Now the Day Dawis,” and “Into June.”

Montgomerie's verses, judging from their style, were probably not written before the reign of James VI. Farther back, however, than the Douglas and Dunbar references carry us, all is conjecture; and the tradition alluded to by Burns that it was the air to which

Bruce's army marched to the victory of Bannockburn is tradition and nothing more.

How the air acquired its later name of “Hey, tutti, taitie,” or what that title means, has never been satisfactorily explained.

Montgomerie's song was long supposed to be lost, until Sibbald, as he tells us himself in his *Chronicles of Scottish Poetry*, was lucky enough to find it in a manuscript collection of poems in the College Library of Edinburgh. The music which Sibbald gives to the old song, although a little less ornate, is fundamentally the same air as that now in use.

A hundred years after Montgomerie's time the tune re-appears in a new dress, this time in a Jacobite costume, in the toast song of “Here's to the King, Sir,” published in Thomson's *Scottish Airs*, and containing an allusion to the project of Charles XII. of Sweden coming to the help of the House of Stuart, which enables us to fix its date about 1718. So all the sets of words, from first to last, can be sung to the same tune, by whatever name we choose to call it. Montgomerie's “Hey ! Now the Day Dawis,” of the end of the 16th century ; the Jacobite drinking song of the beginning of last century ; as well as the “Scots wha hae” of Burns, and Lady Nairne's “Land of the Leal”—both now about a hundred years old—are all fitted to the same frame, both musically and metrically. The poems in each case are written in the same stanza, that known as the Kyrielle, consisting of four lines, the first, second, and third rhyming, while the fourth is used as a refrain.

There has been some difference of opinion as to the exact date and circumstances under which Burns produced “Scots wha hae,” arising out of a discrepancy between a state-

ment made by Burns in a letter to his friend Thomson, and a statement of quite a different kind made by his more intimate friend, John Syme. Mr. Syme declares that the poem was composed when they were riding together through a thunderstorm between Kenmare and Gatehouse, in July, 1793, and that on the following day Burns gave him a copy of the poem. But the poet, writing to Thomson a full month after, says that he wrote it "yesterday." The fact that the two friends did make the journey, as well as the time and place of it, is not disputed ; and in believing that Burns was inaccurate, we are only believing in inaccuracies he was continually committing, many of them far more ridiculous than this. In one case he sent his friend Thomson a song which he declared he had just finished—"glowing from the mint" were the words he used—while he had sent the same poem two years before in a letter to Clarinda. There was no intention to misrepresent matters ; but Burns was careless and forgetful about such things, and his pockets as well as his brains were kept crammed with song material by his indefatigable provider, Mr. Thomson, so that he must have had many poems about him in every stage of development. Lockhart says we have the germ of Burns's ode in the rapture he expressed while standing on the field of Bannockburn, an eloquent note upon which appears in his Journal of August, 1787, six years before the poem made its appearance. The poet, we must remember, had a reputation for improvising, which he was vain enough to encourage, although he lets us know what care he bestowed on his higher efforts ; how, when all his preliminary cogitation and workings of his bosom were over, he retired with his subject "to the solitary fireside of his study." Who now would compare any of his admitted impromptus with his finished work ? Had the poet lived to superintend a final edition of his works, he would not have suffered them to appear in the same volume with the "Cotter's Saturday Night," "Hallowe'en," or "Tam o' Shanter." Poems like "Scots wha hae" are not written off the reel ; and when Burns sent it to his friend Thomson, he probably did not intend to convey anything more than that he had given the final revision,

the last touch to a poem he had been working on for some time, and of which—as we have seen—a prose version had been standing ready for use in his Journal for six years. The poet gains nothing from those worshippers of his who with more zeal than discretion, credit him, in addition to his wonderful gifts, with the power of working miracles.

The tradition that "Tam o' Shanter" was the unpremeditated outcome of a river-side ramble in the autumn of 1790 is another example of those ridiculous exaggerations, which can be abundantly refuted from the poet's own letters. The story is mainly supported by "the not immaculate M'Diarmid," as Lockhart calls him, who, on purpose to make the performance more wonderful still, says that the poet wrote the verses "on the top of a sod-dike." In a letter, however, to Alexander Cunningham, dated 22nd January, 1791, (and this furnishes an exact parallel to the "Scots wha hae" letter to Thomson) Burns says :—"I have just finished a poem, which you will receive enclosed." The poem was "Tam o' Shanter," and the letter scatters to the winds M'Dairmid and the sod-dike tradition. Burns knew well the pains the poem had cost him. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop he says "that 'Tam o' Shanter' shows a *finishing polish* that I despair of ever excelling." When Ben Jonson said that a good poet is made as well as born, he might have said the same thing of a good poem—that, at all events, was Burns's opinion. Writing to Lady Don, we find him saying :—"Though the rough material of fine writing is undoubtedly the gift of genius, the workmanship is as certainly the united effort of labour, attention and pains." Burns's traditional feat on the banks of the Nith was impossible not only for him but for any poet that ever lived. Neither Dante by the Arno, nor Shakespeare by the Avon, could have gone out for a river stroll and brought back in his pocket such a piece of finished art as "Tam o' Shanter"—one of the masterpieces of the world—not less remarkable for its marvellous construction than for its unrivalled imagery. It has the humour of Falstaff and the weird horror of the "Inferno."

And so "Scots wha hae," like "Tam o' Shanter," and indeed all Burns's best work,

can easily be distinguished by the careful perfection of their finish from those other efforts of his which he did not think were worth the same labour. Only in his case, as in others, where the highest art comes into play, the products which appear to be the most natural and easy and artless are just those upon which the greatest art has been bestowed. No doubt, then, the story of John Syme is a true one, and that when he rode through the thunder-storm with his singing and gesticulating companion, he heard the first rough murmur of that great hymn which has since become the "Marseillaise" of Scotland. The story at all events has been accepted by one of his best biographers, Lockhart, and by his still more distinguished critic, Carlyle, and there it may safely be allowed to rest.

In the history of a tune we occasionally encounter some curious and unsuspected transformations. The air usually sung to the Hundredth Psalm, and which has been by some erroneously ascribed to Luther, was a love ditty long before his day. Henry II.'s Queen used to sing to him her favourite Psalm, "Rebuke me not in thine indignation," to a fashionable jig. The air of "Tutti, taitie," shows the same curious variety of uses. From a quaint old pastoral it passes into a boisterous drinking song. Then from a fierce and defiant battle-cry, it seeks rest, as if with wearied wing, in the tender pathos of "The Land o' the Leal." Verily, on the world's stage, a tune, like a man, in its time plays many parts.

XXXI.—IN MEMORIAM, JAMES M'KIE.

BORN, 1816.—DIED, 1891.

By JOHN HYSLOP.

" Touch once more a sober measure,
And let punch and tears be shed,
For a prince of good old fellows
That, alack-a-day ! is dead."

"Lament for Captain Paton," by J. G. Lockhart.

THUS in the century's earlier years
A poet troll'd his doleful lay
For one, a prince among his peers,
Like him, we miss and mourn to-day.
Yorick has gone. We knew him well ;
His like again we'll never see ;
But we will to our children tell
The name and fame of James M'Kie.

We'll miss the click-clack of his staff
As he went walking up and down,
With cheering word and merry laugh,
Through all the streets and lanes of town.
As some lone lake in its far deeps
A star from the high heaven inurns,
So, deep within his soul who sleeps,
Lay shrined the name of Robert Burns.

His queer, quaint saws, with wisdom fraught,
He gave not with a canting whine,
But his own thoughts he spake and taught,
Nor heeded much for yours or mine.
He sought for truth—he hated sham
And snivelling, sanctimonious phrase ;

Believed no Theosophic cram,
Nor any mad Mahatma craze.

In all this wide and teeming earth
There lives no purely perfect thing ;
We halt and stumble from our birth,
And he was but a *man* I sing.
But see him o'er a social cup,
Filled "wi' a wee drap barley bree"—
Then the warm heart came bubbling up
We loved and prized in James M'Kie.

Peace to his shade ! why weep or wail ?
Draw close the shroud about his brow.
We cannot pierce beyond The Veil,
He's safe within God's keeping now.
We'll keep his fame from moth or rust,
And sound his name to future days,
For it can only drop to dust
With the proud pile he helped to raise.

Where'er the foot of Scotsman turns—
In every land, on every sea—
They'll link the name of Robert Burns
With his disciple James M'Kie.

XXXII.—ROBERT BURNS.

A Lecture delivered in Investigator Hall, Paine Memorial, before the Ingersoll Secular Society.

BY DR. W. SYMINGTON BROWN.

Reprinted from the BOSTON INVESTIGATOR, March 15th, 1893.

THERE is something peculiar about the life and fame of Robert Burns. He was born in 1759, and died in 1796. More than a century has gone since he became famous ; nearly a century has passed away since he died ; but his memory is as green and as well-beloved as if he had only died yesterday. But two names I know anything about can compare with his in this respect—names which are loved, cherished, almost idolized in the hearts of the common people, who know their true friends by a sort of instinct, who do not need legal proofs to convince them that they are right, who arrive at their conclusions by the short cut of the human heart—these men are William Shakespeare and Marcus Aurelius. The former is too well known to need comment ; but the great Roman emperor is not so familiar to American ears. A personal experience, which occurred to me in 1884, while on a visit to Scotland, will explain what I mean. I had gone across the ocean for rest and recreation, and was wandering about the streets of Glasgow, when I reached an Italian image store, and stepped inside to look at figures and casts in plaster-of-paris. Amongst the rest I found a small bust of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, and I asked the proprietor, "Who is that?" He straightened himself, and replied, with an unction which only a fellow-countryman can feel, "Marcus Aurelius, Signor, our beloved ruler." So I bought the little image, carried it home with me, and it stands on my office mantlepiece in the place of honour. Why? Because of all the men that ever lived I believe that he was the greatest and most lovable. Seventeen hundred years have gone by, his very dust has disappeared, but there is scarcely a Roman house to-day, however poor its inmates, which does not contain something in remembrance of the man who did more for humanity *per se* than any other citizen ever did, and who, although he was not a Christian, is still loved by all honest men and women, Christians included.

As I will try to demonstrate, the same elements enter into the popularity of Robert Burns. Men do not respect a coward ; they do not love a selfish man, and they worship men who make outspoken demands for justice.

Burns died in his thirty-eighth year. He began to work on his father's farm when merely a boy ; he did a man's work—hard, laborious work, averaging about fourteen hours a day. In the twelve or thirteen years of literary work, during which he also toiled as a farmer or as an exciseman, he wrote, in prose and verse, an amount of matter which fills several volumes ; nearly all of it well worth reading, and most of it so noble, truthful, and inspiring, that the rational portion of the world "will not willingly let [it] die." Two fair inferences may be drawn from these facts.

First, Burns must have been a very industrious man. No shilly-shally, lackadaisical rhymers, like many who went before and came after him, but an honest worker who set a proper estimate on the value of time, and worked while it was day with all his might.

Second, it is evident that no habitual drunkard could have produced such an amount of good literary work in so short a time. The notion that Burns was a very intemperate man—assiduously spread by religious bigots and total abstainers—has no foundation in fact, is proved to be impossible by the quantity and quality of his literary work, and is easily explained by the convivial habits almost universal at that time. Everybody drank whiskey then—even the clergy ; and I strongly suspect that a good many people in Scotland drink whiskey still.

Compare Burns with Coleridge. We never hear any complaint from the same "rigidly righteous" class about Coleridge being a slave to opium. Although a man of genius, he was lazy. All Coleridge's poems worth preserving might be put into a thin pamphlet. His

"Table Talk" and other prose writings unmistakably smell of drugs ; here and there a feeble spark of genius, and the rest silly namby-pambyism about creeds and other foolish topics. Why do we read nothing against Coleridge ? Simply because he defended the Church ; in a maudlin sort of a way, it is true ; but in what other way can anybody defend it ? Burns attacked the Church ; he exposed its hypocrisy and greed. That of course proved that he was a bad man —a drunkard.

Burns was a peasant ; the son of peasants. His moral surroundings in early life were good. Both father and mother were decent, serious folks, who had a moderate amount of intellectual culture, and who exerted themselves to the utmost to give their children a sound, useful education. But the physical surroundings were antagonistic, unhealthy. I beg special attention to this aspect of the case, because none of Burns's biographers or critics have taken it into account. All the writers I refer to—Currie, Cunningham, Carlyle, Blackie, Hately Waddell, etc.—tell us about the poverty of his parents, but they do not even hint at the monstrous injustice responsible for that poverty. Robert's father was certainly not to blame. He was a very industrious man ; but the money he was obliged to pay to his landlords, for the mere privilege of being allowed to work, reduced him to abject poverty. Landlordism, like the old man of the sea who sat on Sinbad's shoulders, clung to him through life, and crushed him. After paying rent, what was left was not sufficient to furnish the necessities of life, to say nothing about luxuries. It would be out of place to-day to discuss the labour question ; but, to prevent misconception, allow me to explain that the term "rent," in this connection, does not apply to houses, only to land. William Burns built, with his own hands, the poor cottage in which Robert was born. *It was the land that he paid rent for* ; and any candid person must surely admit that there is an essential difference between paying for the privilege of occupying a house, which somebody must have built, and the use of unimproved land, which no human being created. Land, water, sunheat and air do not owe their ex-

istence to man's labour. A house does ; it must be built. I assert that everybody has a birthright in the use of as much land as he needs to sustain life, as much but no more. He never can have a right to peddle it out at either a high or a low rent to others. Might has hitherto controlled this land question. No king nor cunning priest created land. All that any man should pay for the use of it is for the privilege of selection, and the money thus paid should go into the public treasury, to be expended for the public benefit.

When Robert Burns began to earn money as a farm-labourer—doing a man's work, and doing it well, all that he received in the shape of wages was thirty-five dollars a year and his board. If you deduct the cost of clothes, and the few books he bought, we can easily estimate how little would be left for dissipation. The fact is that Burns was never a dissipated man in the ordinary meaning of that term. He was a passionate man—all poets are—and his passions sometimes carried him into miry places. Do you know any one who is sinless ? I don't ; and, what is more, I don't desire to know one, for he would be a monstrosity. A small sect of Christians exist who call themselves holiness people, and who say that they are perfect in holiness. I have met with a few of these people ; but most of them do not appear to be quite as near perfection as many others who make no claim to that dubious honour.

The fact is that Robert Burns was an honest, industrious man, willing to work for small pay ; anxious to provide all the comforts he could for his wife and children ; generous with his money when he had any, and remarkably unselfish. Only a clear-headed man could have arrived at the logical conclusions he did about labour 100 years ago. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, he says :—

"I cannot say that I give him joy of his life as a farmer. 'Tis, as a farmer paying a dear, unconscionable rent, *a cursed life !* As to a laird farming his own property, sowing his own corn in hope, and reaping it, in spite of brittle weather, in gladness ; knowing that none can say unto him, What dost thou ? fattening his herds, shearing his flocks, rejoicing at Christmas, and begetting sons and

daughters, until he be the venerated, gray-haired leader of a little tribe—'tis a heavenly life ! but devil take the life of reaping the fruits that another must eat." This is precisely the same idea which Carlyle afterwards blurted out so tersely :—

" The widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner ; a perfumed seigneur, delicately lounging in the Oeil de Beuf, hath an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and call it rent." Yes ! and this alchemy resulted in the French revolution, with due blowing up of the perfumed alchemist.

There is one point about Robert Burns sometimes overlooked, *viz.*, that he never had any other than the most meagre common school education. He never had free access to what was known about science even in that day of darkness. For there was not much known about chemistry, geology, biology, or hygiene a century ago, even by the advance guard of freethinkers. Our own Voltaire, with all his talent and industry imagined that fossil shells found on mountain tops had been dropped there by pilgrims ! Decent people, like Burns's father, still believed that prayers could avert calamities and cure cancers ! And the bulk of common people imagined that a dirty, lousy saint, who fasted in a cell, was a much better man than a clean sinner who worked in the fields ! When we appreciate how far advanced in freedom of thought Robert Burns was ; how ably he dissected the silly, religious sophistries of his day, one must admire the courage he displayed in expressing unpopular opinions. The highest excellence in the character of Burns is his sincerity. Whatever germinates in his fertile brain comes out, without fear or favour. And as we cannot conceive of a true soul defending any form of slavery, his innermost and his outermost thoughts were always pledged to freedom ;—freedom of mind, freedom of body, the greatest good—not of the greatest number merely, but of every human being on the face of the earth. It is a melancholy fact, and one which marks how little real progress we have made yet that so few persons possess courage enough to *say* what they *think*.

Another point worthy of notice is this.

From early boyhood up to mature manhood Burns lived principally on oatmeal and milk—mostly buttermilk. Animal food was seldom in his father's house, and it could not have been very plenty in his own on an annual income of \$350. With the exception of his two visits to Edinburgh, and the journeys he made while there, Burns's daily diet must have been of the simplest kind. Beef is a good thing in its own place, no doubt ; but it does not seem to be essential to genius. These remarks are not intended as a plea for vegetarianism. A moderate amount of animal food is necessary in our cold climate ; but I think that Americans and English people eat more flesh than is good for them.

In Burns's letter to Dr. Moore, which contains a brief biography of the poet, he says :—" I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say 'idiot piety,' because I was then but a child."

It did not take Burns very long to get rid of his "idiot piety." No man of moderate intelligence, who thinks about the subject at all, can avoid entertaining doubts about religion. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, Burns says :—

" Can it be possible that when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence ? . . . Ye venerable sages and holy flamens, is there probability in your conjectures, truth in your stories, of another world beyond death ? or, are they all alike baseless visions and fabricated fables ? If there is another life, it must only be for the just, the benevolent, and the humane."

Robert Burns, like Voltaire and Paine, was a deist ; *i.e.*, he believed in a personal God, who created the universe, and rules it somewhat after the fashion of an ordinary king. This hypothesis includes what is commonly called divine providence. It is not necessary to discuss deism to-day. Not a few good men still believe in it, after a fashion ; but advanced thinkers have long since abandoned the theory as untenable. They have become agnostic ; *i.e.*, men who believe only what they clearly understand.

There are numberless things in Nature which the human mind has not mastered yet, such, *e.g.*, as the origin of evil. It puzzles us to find out why so many suffer pain, the nature and object of which we cannot fully explain ; and, consequently, we cannot believe in a theory which is as obscure as the thing itself. A so-called religious explanation is like a kitten chasing its tail ; it may be amusing, but it is not explanatory.

One thing is very plain about Robert Burns. He was not a Calvinist. He held the Westminster Confession of Faith in healthy abhorrence ; and, indeed, he may fairly be credited with the merit of giving it its death-blow. It is difficult for the present generation to form an accurate idea of the relative standing which the clergy and laity occupied in Burns's day. A clergyman was a power, not only in the church but in the state, equal if not superior, to the civil magistrate. The virtue in which our clergy are most deficient is humility. They keep the keys of heaven, and admit or reject whom they please. It is one of our popular mistakes that protestant priests claim less than Roman Catholic ones. They both claim the same power, *viz.*, the right to remit sins or to fasten them on the culprit for ever. They even manufacture sins—such as Sabbath desecration and kin marriages—and impose penalties for committing them !

A century ago, protestant priests were more outspoken than they are to-day, and they possessed more power. If they had not been backed by the civil magistrate you may be sure that Robert Burns would not have stood up in church to be rebuked by a clergyman for a sexual offence.

Burns's celebrated poem, entitled "The Holy Fair," has reference to the sacrament of the "Lord's Supper," which, in Scotland, is celebrated twice a year. In county parishes it is customary to invite several ministers to assist in the performance ; and sometimes hundreds of people assemble on these occasions, after the fashion of our summer camp-meetings. The poem is a graphic description of these religious vanity fairs.

Two reflections occur to me in connection with this poem. While I assert that there are no obscene passages in any of Burns's poems, I think it must be admitted that some

of them contain words not usually read in public. The same remark applies to Smollett's and Fielding's novels, and also to the Bible. I do not intend to discuss the *pros* and *cons* of this delicate question to-day. All that I claim for Burns, Fielding, and Smollett, I also claim for the authors of the Bible—fair play—that they should be judged by their obvious intention, and the standard of manners prevalent at the time they wrote.

The other reflection is this :—We are too apt to assume that much more progress has been made in morals than the facts warrant. The moral standard depicted in "The Holy Fair" is not a high one ; but if a photograph were made of the sexual morals at a camp-meeting in Massachussets or Maine, would it be much higher ? I doubt it. Some progress has been made in a century ; but I think that part of the apparent progress depends on adroitly covering up certain sins, hiding them rather than avoiding them. The civilized world has become sharper in the art of concealment—more Uriah Heep-like, besides having somewhat less wickedness to conceal. And it is my firm belief that no organisation has done more than the Church to help hypocrites in this modern art of concealment. If a mercantile rascal intends to cheat his creditors, he rents a pew ; if he means to do something outrageously mean, he becomes a church member ; and if he intends to out-herod Herod in thieving, he becomes a deacon or a Sunday-school superintendent. The mantle of religious hypocrisy may indeed be said to "cover a multitude of sins."

In more than a score of places, Robert Burns expresses his doubts about religion and the soul's immortality. He says : "All my fears and cares are of this world. If there is another, an honest man has nothing to fear from it. I hate a man that wishes to be a deist ; but I fear every fair, unprejudiced enquirer must, in some degree, be a sceptic. It is not that there are any very staggering arguments against the immortality of man ; but, like electricity, phlogiston, etc., the subject is so involved in darkness that we want data to go upon." In another letter he writes : "Of all nonsense, religious nonsense is the most nonsensical : so enough and more than enough of it."

When we recollect that these sentences were written more than one hundred years ago, we can realize how liberal-minded Burns must have been. It is true, he never rose to the height of pantheism ; he seems to have been almost shackled by the gross idea of a personal God, who did as he pleased ; and the grand thought of eternal law, I fear, was to him a shut book.

The Scottish clergy, as a whole, were not friendly to Burns. A few of the more liberal sort enjoyed his attacks on calvinism, in a quiet way, they themselves being afraid to say what they thought about it. In our day, we can scarcely conceive of the subjection to religious despotism which prevailed at that time.

In a letter to his friend Mr. Nicol, Burns says : " You must have heard how the Rev. Mr. Lawson and the rest of that faction have accused the unfortunate and Rev. Mr. Heron, that, in ordaining Mr. Nelson, he, the said Heron, feloniously and treasonably bound the said Nelson to the Confession of Faith, *sofar as it was agreeable to reason and the Word of God!*" That is to say, it was felony and treason to doubt the infallibility of a document written by a handful of protestant priests ! And yet the successors of these men pretend to be horrified at Leo's claim of infallibility. Poor old pope, he surely has as good a right to this ridiculous claim as they have. In 1740, the presbytery of Auchterarder required all candidates for the pulpit to sign the following moral declaration : " I believe that it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin, in order to our coming to Christ." To avoid sinful deeds would indeed be a work of supererogation when a belief in Christ's saving blood can wipe them all away.

But we will now look at Robert Burns from another standpoint—the social one. There can be no doubt that he excelled both as a conversationalist and as a letter writer. Those who had the privilege of social intercourse with the poet, and who were competent to judge, all agree that his conversational powers were marvellous. Some say that his familiar talks were even better than his poetry. This appeared obvious on his first visit to Edinburgh, during the few months of

prosperity he enjoyed, when men like Dugald Stewart, Dr. Blacklock, and other dignitaries met him, and were as much astonished as delighted that a ploughman could discuss abstruse questions with them and hold his own. We can only regret that some faithful Boswell did not stick to him, and note down the witty, caustic sayings of Scotland's greatest poet. Dr. Samuel Johnson's books are no longer read ; they are really obsolete ; but Boswell's account of what Johnson said still lives, and bids fair to live for generations to come.

Burns also excelled as a letter writer. Whatever he did he tried to do well. Many of his letters were re-written from the first scroll ; which accounts for the discrepancies in published copies of the same letter. His genius shines through all of them. Perhaps we might except some of those to Clarinda, which, it must be confessed, are rather sentimental ; less like the frank, openhearted poet than the rest. One reason for this weakness is the fact that Clarinda seems to have been a religious bigot, and Burns, being much attached to her, tried to twist his own belief more into line with her absurd theology than the sober truth warranted.

There can be no doubt that Burns's popularity decreased after he went to Dumfries and became an exciseman. Not with the common people, who always "heard him gladly," and who hear him still as gladly as ever. But the upper-crust gentility soon concluded that it was not genteel to associate with a mere ploughman, and they gave him the cold shoulder ! A truly marvelous sight for men and mice to look upon ! One of his friends tells about meeting Burns on the street in Dumfries, on the night of a county ball, and how the gentry snubbed Burns, as they passed in their gala attire. I do not feel like taking the dead to task ; nay, I do not think that it would be worth while to do so if the revellers were living. The same class who tried to look down on Robert Burns exist to-day, and behave as badly as the Dumfries gentry did a century ago. Why should *we* worry ourselves about them ? They do not know any better. You cannot put a quart of milk into a pint pitcher by any known process, not even by the aid of prayer ! The

gay butterflies of fashion flutter about for their brief day, possibly answering some purpose in the great plan of Nature, which, however, nobody yet has been able to find out.

"A man's a man for a' that" is the Scotch Marseillaise hymn, which has been ringing unheeded for a hundred years, and which will continue to ring until its honest demands are answered.

During the French revolution, Burns made a present of four small cannon to the Republic; but the Tory government seized them at Dover, and they would have turned him out of his little office, if it had not been for the interception of a political friend whose vote they needed.

Robert Burns had his faults, no doubt. I do not attempt to conceal the blemishes any more than the beauties. He was extravagantly fond of women; and he drank too much fiery liquor. He himself admits that his heart was like a tinder box. When he saw a beautiful woman, he could scarcely help falling in love with her, without regard to her rank or the reasonableness of the hasty attachment. There are facts in connection with his courtship of Highland Mary, Jean Armour, and Mrs. McLehose which are not creditable to him. He seems, at times, to have been carried off his feet with an amorous passion so strong that he could not resist it. Many of his best songs were the offspring of these fits; and it is safe to say that they would never have been written if Burns had been a model youth, after the Sunday-school pattern. You can take your choice whether it would have been better to lose the poetry or the passion.

Lord Byron, who was born about eight years after Burns died, and who also died young, in some respects resembled our great Scottish poet. Byron had the same intense hatred of cant and humbug which permeated the ploughman from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Both were ardent friends of human liberty. Both attacked superstition fearlessly, and both were denounced by the clergy as infidels. They refused to admit Byron's body to Westminster Abbey on that account.

Robert Burns was always a poor man, surrounded by circumstances which crippled his

great powers. That which puzzles me, and has puzzled a good many wiser folks, is how to account for the wonderful genius of the man, his constant industry while harrassed by poverty, and his sturdy independence under great temptation. I have no doubt that much genuine poetry is never written. It floats—a chaotic mass—in the brains of thousands who lack artistic power to give it form and birth. Nor is this unwritten poetry therefore useless. It lights up the individual character like a dim, distant star, which, while it sheds little light on our world, is all important to its own circle of worlds.

When we judge a man's character, it depends a good deal upon who is the judge as to the verdict; there are so many different standards. One man says, Does he go to church? Does he attend the weekly prayer meeting? Of course, that is not my standard. I ask, Is he selfish? Is he just and honest? Robert Burns was neither selfish nor greedy. Quite the opposite, in fact. He gave about half the proceeds of the Edinburgh edition of his poems to his brother, although he needed the money himself. John Ruskin says, "Whenever one hand meets another helpfully, that is the holy or mother church which ever is or ever shall be," and Robert Burns, though poor as poor could be, was ever holding out his helping hand to those as poor as himself.

This brings us to the point we started from—the explanation why his memory remains so fresh while so many other great names are almost forgotten. To be loved one must be lovable. There is no other way. Immense wealth and high rank cannot compete with love; that is the true philosopher's stone; the universal solvent. Robert Burns was a great poet; but his manliness, his independence, his free-thought, and his love of liberty, were even greater than his poetry. "A man's a man for a' that" is an epitome of his character. That line should have been engraved on his monument.

"Judge not ye whose thoughts are fingers
Of the hands that witch the lyre;
Greenland has its mountain icebergs,
Etna has its heart of fire,
Calculation has its plummet,
Self-control its iron rules,
Genius has its sparkling fountains,
Dullness has its stagnant pools."

" As the sun from out the orient
 Pours a wider, warmer light,
 'Till he floods both earth and ocean,
 Blazing from the zenith's height ;
 So the glory of our poet,
 In his deathless power serene,

Shines, as rolling time advances,
 Warmer felt and wider seen.
 First Doon's banks and braes contained it,
 Then his country formed its span,
 Now the wide world is its empire,
 And its throne the heart of man."

—[Moir.]

XXXIII.—TO A COPY OF BURNS'S POEMS.

(*Found in the house of an Ontario farmer.*)

BY W. M. MACKERACHER.

LARGE Book, with heavy cover worn and old,
 •Wearing clear proof of usage and of years,
 Thy edges yellow with their faded gold,
 Thy leaves with fingers stained—perchance
 with tears.

How oft thy venerable page has felt
 The hardened hands of honourable toil !
 How oft thy simple song had power to melt
 The hearts of the rude tillers of the soil !

How oft has memory borne them back to see
 The Scottish peasant at his work, and thou
 Hast made them feel the grandeur of the free
 And independent follower of the plough !

What careth he that his proud name hath
 pealed
 From shore to shore since his new race
 began,
 In humble cot and "histie stibble-field"
 Who doth "preserve the dignity of man?"

With reverend hands I lay aside the tome,
 And to my lonely heart content returns;
 And in the stranger's house I am at home,
 For thou dost make us brothers, Robert
 Burns.

True Bard, that upwards of a hundred years
 Hast waked these sacred passions in the
 breast !
 Who doth accuse thee ? Thou art with thy
 peers ;
 God hath exalted thee, for He knows best.

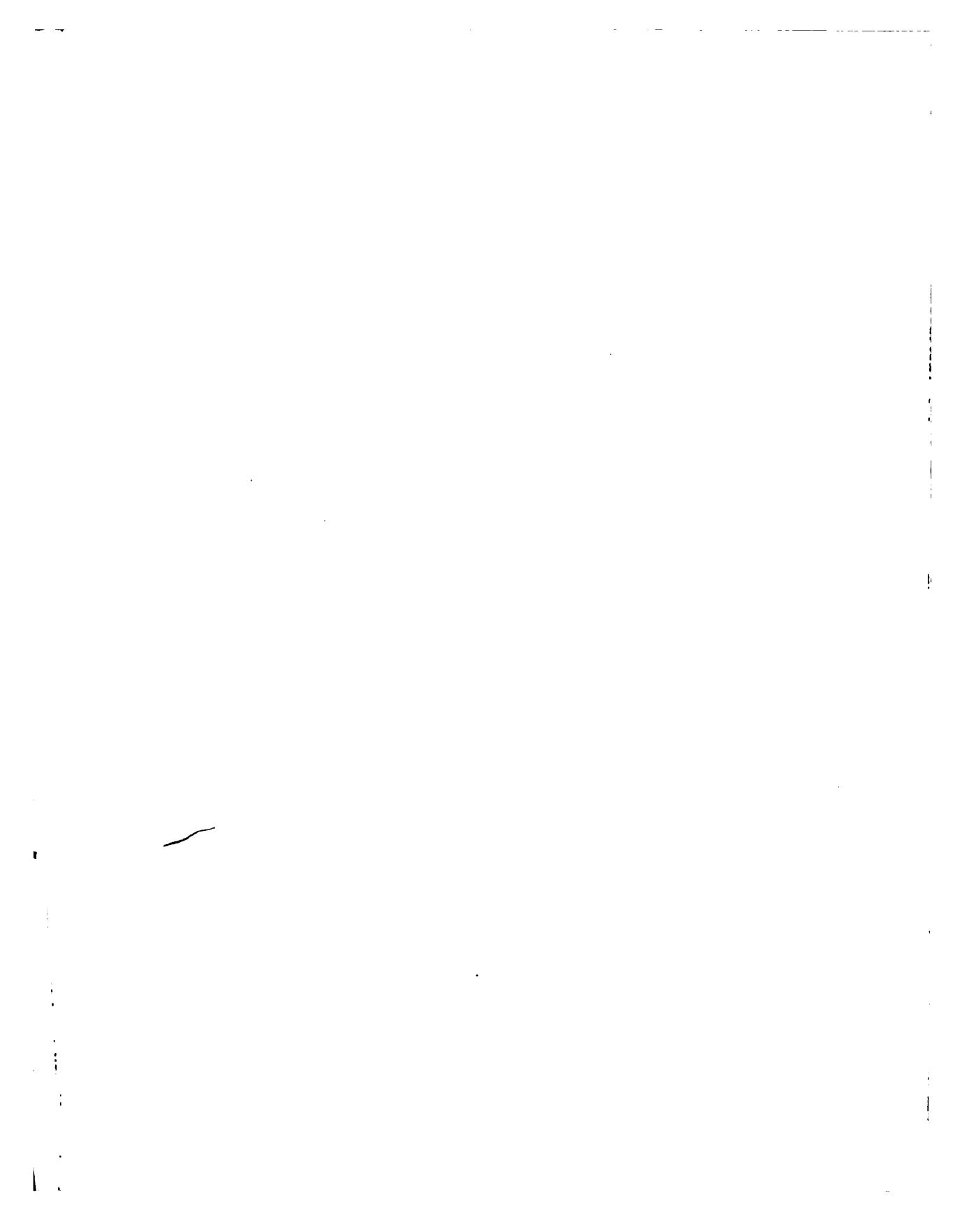
And thou, old Book, go down from sire to
 son ;
 Repeat the pathos of the poet's life ;
 Sing the sweet song of him who fought and
 won,
 The outward struggle and the inward strife.

Go down, grand Book, from hoary sire to
 son ;
 Keep by the Book of Books thy wonted
 place ;
 Tell what the human man has felt and done,
 And make of us and ours a noble race.

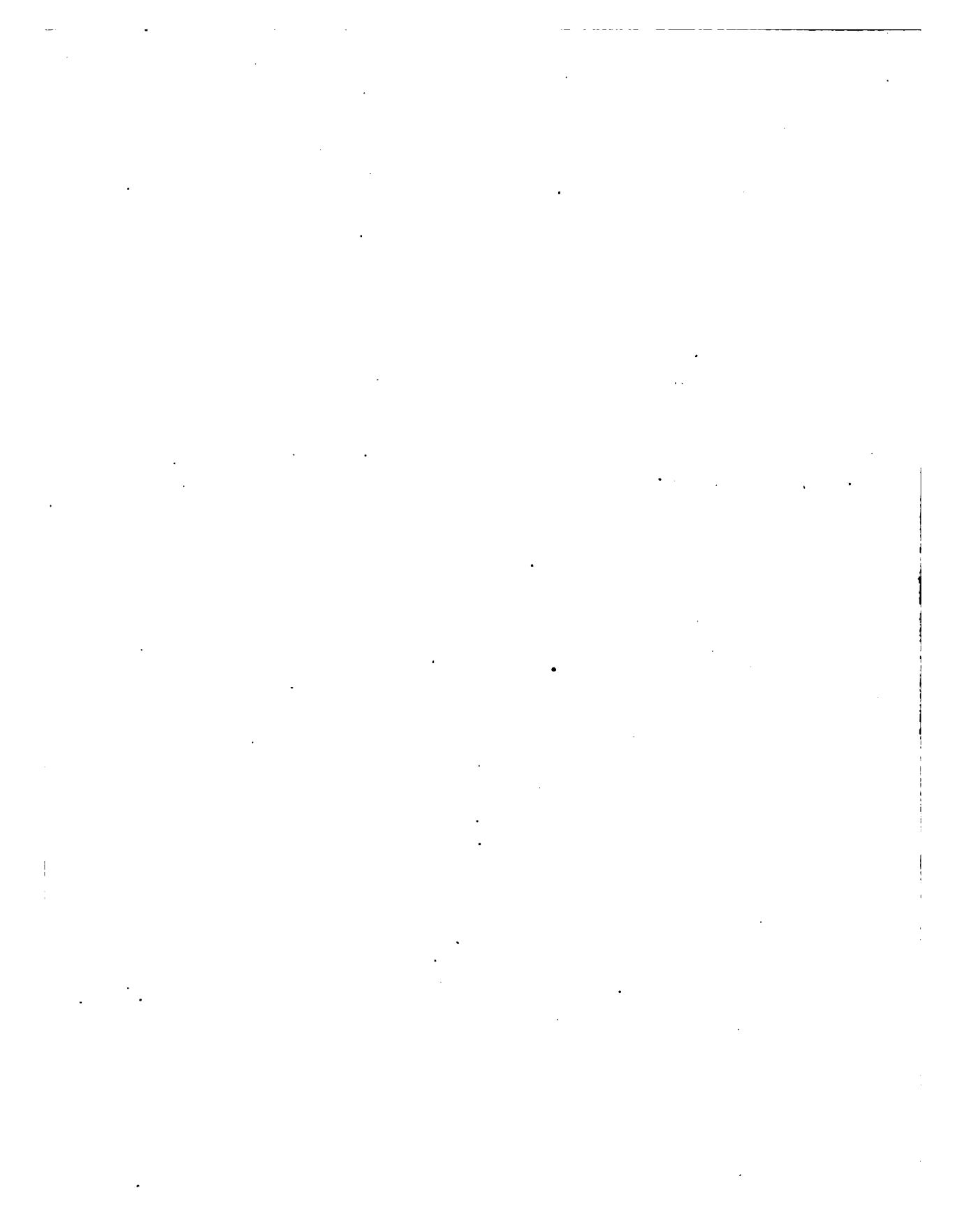
A race to scorn the sordid greed of gold,
 To spurn the spurious virtue as the base,
 Despise the shams that may be bought and
 sold ;
 A race of brothers and of men ; a race

To usher in the long-awaited time
 Good men have sought and poets have
 foretold.
 When this bright world shall be the happy
 clime
 Of brotherhood and peace ; when men
 shall mould

Their lives like His who walked in Palestine,
 The truly human manhood thou dost show,
 Leading them upward to the pure divine
 Nature of God made manifest below.

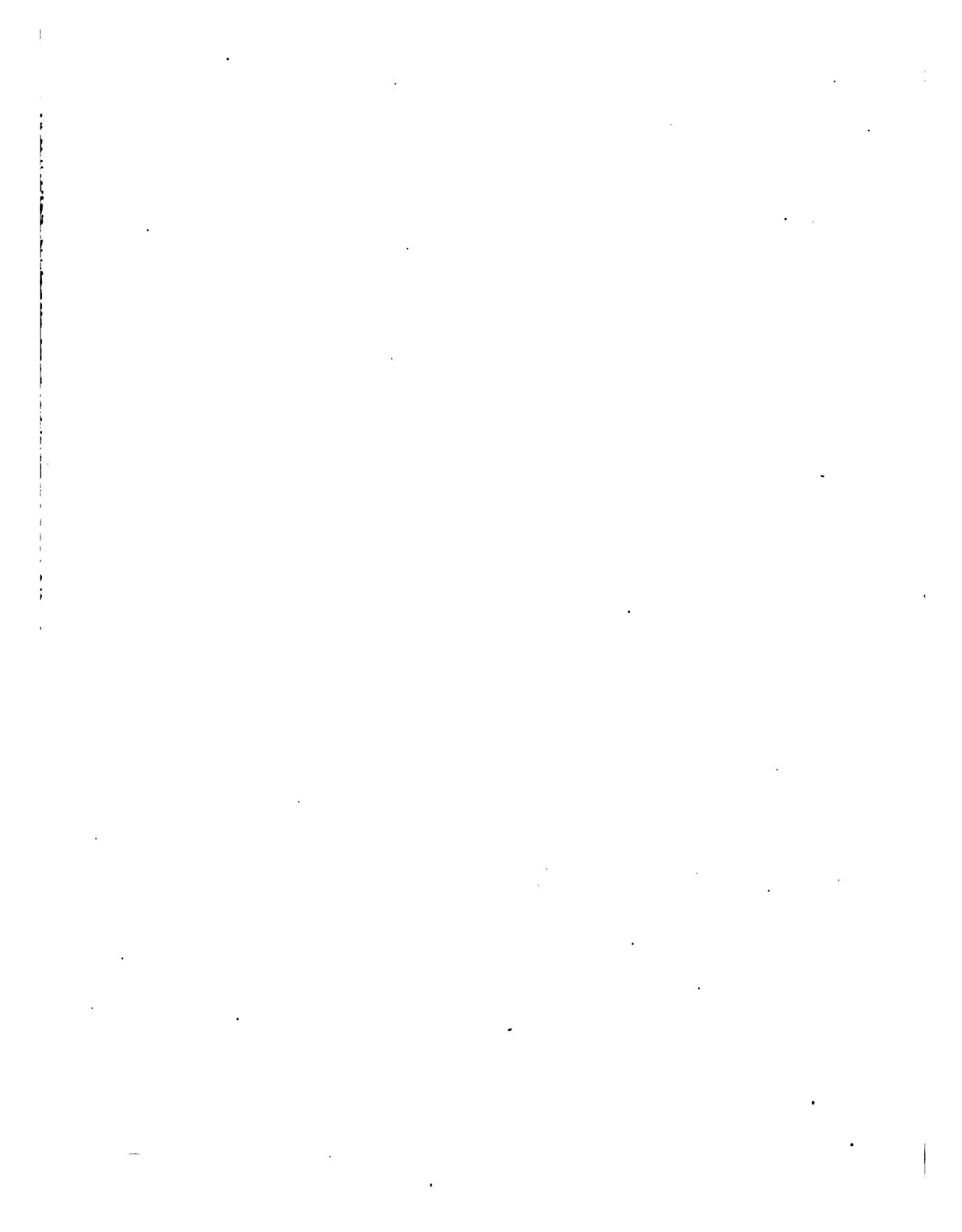


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